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ABSTRACT

The Newspaper, Part 2 section of the Proceedings contains the following 10 papers: "Newsroom Teams: A Baseline Study of Prevalence, Organization and Effectiveness" (Fred F. Endres, Ann B. Schierhorn, and Carl Schierhorn); "Hispanics & the Media: A Case Study of Coverage in 'The Dallas Morning News'" (Camille R. Kraeplin and Federico Subervi); "Getting It Right: Newsmaker Perceptions of Accuracy and Credibility" (Scott R. Maier); "Baseball Box Scores in the Newspaper: Helpful Statistics or Sports Hieroglyphics?" (C. A. Tuggle and Don Sneed); "Diversity Efforts in the Newsroom: Doin' the Right Thing or Just a Case of Show Me the Money?" (Richard Gross, Patricia A. Curtin, and Glen T. Cameron); "Improving Newspaper Delivery: A Factor Analysis of Route Demographic Variables and Reliability Measures" (Marc Seamon); "The Shrinking Sphere of Privacy: Candidate Coverage in Presidential Politics, 1980 to 1996" (Elizabeth A. Skewes); "Are Young People Reading the Newspaper? A 25-Year Cohort Analysis" (Nancy Cheever and Tony Rimmer); "Job Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction of Texas Newspaper Reporters" (Li-jing Arthur Chang and George Sylvie); and "Local Views on Local News" (Patricia M. Kennedy). (RS)

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Newsroom Teams:
A baseline study of prevalence,
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annual convention in New Orleans, La.
August 4, 1999

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Newsroom Teams: A baseline study of prevalence, organization and effectiveness

Although the concept of teamwork as an organizational model has been promoted in the business world for the past 25 years, only recently have some newsrooms begun to adopt the team model. This baseline study of U.S. newspaper managing editors found that 37 percent reported they had a full or partial permanent team system in place. Most of those teams were organized by news topic or as an ad hoc group of reporters, editors and designers who planned and executed specific stories or packages. Editors who had a team structure expressed satisfaction with the effectiveness of the structure compared to a traditional beat structure.

Newsroom Teams:
A baseline study of prevalence, organization and effectiveness

The concept of teamwork in the work place has permeated business literature for 25 years, but the concept of a newsroom organized around teams only recently has been accepted on some newspapers. This descriptive study seeks to determine, among other things, the prevalence of teams on newspapers, how they are operating and how their effectiveness is measured.

Teams, described in business literature as self-directed work teams, self-managing teams and cross-functional teams, are small groups of employees responsible for turning out a finished product or service. The team members, who possess a variety of skills, share responsibility for the finished work.[1]

In his classic work, *Management,* published 25 years ago, Peter Drucker predicted the team would become a permanent structural design in business. He contrasted the team model, in which workers with different skills and tools collaborate to complete a job, with two other organizational models for work, in which 1) work moves where the skills and tools are, such as on a factory assembly line, or 2) work is done sequentially in one place, such as building a house.[2]

By 1993, influential management consultants Michael Hammer and James Champy were promoting the team as a new business model that represented a departure from 200 years of organizational design. They distinguished it from Adam Smith's principle of the division of labor, in which work is fragmented into tasks, each one assigned to a specialist.[3] The team model, as they described it, is organized not around tasks, but around processes.

The team model was pioneered in Britain and Sweden in the 1950s[4] and had been advocated for several decades, but it became fashionable in the United States only in the 1980s when companies, propelled by a changing economy, looked for ways to improve performance.[5] U.S. managers, looking to Europe and the Far East for ways to increase productivity in the '80s, found models in companies that used a participatory approach, including teamwork and employee involvement.[6] W. Edwards Deming, who consulted with Japanese firms on new management principles to improve productivity and quality, was among those advocating the use of teams as part of total quality management. In his 14 Points for Management, adopted now by many U.S. companies, he called for eliminating barriers between departments so that employees in research, design, sales and production could work as a team.[7]

In 1987, 1990 and 1993, Edward Lawler of the University of Southern California and researchers Susan Albers Mohrman and Gerald E. Ledford Jr. surveyed Fortune 1000 corporations on their use of participatory management techniques. Their studies showed that most of the corporations responding reported they chose a participatory management style, which includes teams,[8] in response to market pressures, particularly global competition.[9] Specifically, the firms gave as their primary reasons "to improve productivity," "to improve quality" and "to improve employee motivation."[10]

The Lawler study showed 70 percent of the companies surveyed in 1993 had employees involved in self-managing work teams compared to 47 percent in 1990 and 27 percent in 1987. Most of the companies reporting the use of teams in 1993 had no more than 20 percent of their employees involved.[11] However, 68 percent of those companies surveyed expected to increase use of work teams in the coming two years.[12]

Reflecting the interest in teams by American businesses, the Harvard Business School announced plans in 1993 to overhaul its MBA curriculum to place more emphasis on general management skills such as teamwork and leadership.[13] And a columnist for *The Wall Street Journal* counseled readers on the need to learn to be a team player because many companies were beginning to measure employees' effectiveness in collaboration as well as in individual contributions.[14]

Although the reengineering movement recently has been vilified because of corporate downsizing, Lawler and Mohrman in 1998 suggested that the flattening of hierarchies required for teams is likely to survive as good business practice, along with many of the approaches of employee involvement and total quality management.[15]

Among mass communication businesses, the importance of teamwork has long been recognized in advertising companies. The firm of Doyle Dane Bernbach is credited with first employing the idea of a creative team in its Volkswagen advertising campaign of 1949-51.[16] In that campaign, a writer, creative director, art director and account executive teamed up to launch a successful print advertising campaign and a creative revolution. The campaign brought the "lemon" ads, among others, and the concept of representatives of different advertising departments collaborating on a project.

The team concept increasingly has been advocated for newspapers. As early as 1985, Paul McMasters called for teams in the *Newsroom Management Handbook* published by the American Society of Newspaper Editors Foundation.[17] McMasters cited the experience of *The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer and News* (where six editors participated in a team-building project in 1983), but few newspapers picked up the idea in the 1980s.

Newspaper designer Mario Garcia of the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, which provides mid-career training for professionals, has promoted what he calls the "WED" concept, the marriage of writing, editing and design. As he describes his philosophy, writers, editors and designers collaborate from the idea stage on a project. This represents a break from the traditional approach, in which designers are called in after the story is written.[18]

In a videotape and related materials distributed by the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Buck Ryan advocated "the maestro concept," an approach to teams that he describes as moving newspapers from an assembly line approach (in which designers would be given a completed story) to a system that reshapes the relationship between reporters, assignment editors, photographers, copy editors, designers and artists.[19] By 1995, Carl Sessions Stepp, writing in *American Journalism Review*, could cite newsrooms using a team approach at the Norfolk *Virginian-Pilot,* the Minneapolis *Star Tribune,* Portland *Oregonian, Dayton Daily News*, Columbia (S.C.) *State* and *The Orange County Register* .[20]

Although no survey comparable to Lawler's study of the Fortune 1000 has been conducted to measure use of teamwork in the news media, the dearth of literature in academic and trade publications on newspaper teamwork until the 1990s suggests that newspapers have lagged behind other industries in adopting a team approach.[21]

However, concerns about declining circulation and competition from electronic information delivery systems may accelerate newspapers' interest in teamwork. Indeed, *Wichita Eagle* managing editor Janet Weaver, who revamped the newspaper's newsroom hierarchy into teams in 1995, told *Presstime*, "I want to be part of the group that helps keep newspaper journalism alive instead of part of the group that let it die on their watch."[22]

The experience of the *Eagle* staff is described in a report of the Editorial Leadership Initiative operated jointly by Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism and J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management. That case study relates how teams were implemented in 1995 and how the newspaper, with a team organization in place, responded to the destruction of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City a few months later. [23]

Little other scholarly literature is available on how effectively teams are working in newsrooms, what problems are surfacing that may be peculiar to newsrooms, and how those problems are being solved. Regina Louise Lewis, whose 1997 study found newspaper production departments lagged behind advertising departments and newsrooms in adopting high-performance practices like teams, says researchers must determine how to measure the effects of such practices.[24]

Kathleen A. Hansen, Mark Neuzil and Jean Ward studied newsroom teams at the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* and the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* by surveying journalists on the two staffs for their assessments of teams' effects on news routines and newspaper quality.[25] They determined the effects on news process and news quality were predominantly negative. Some of the issues cited by staffers were the need for more resources, especially copy editors and photographers; difficulty in working in teams with colleagues who worked different shifts; newspapers instituting redesigns simultaneously with restructuring the newsrooms; decision making becoming slower and more complex; staffers feeling that they had less authority; and lack of newsroom discipline. Staffers also expressed concern about accuracy, the trend to softer news stories and the focus on design. The study is more persuasive in showing that morale suffered when the newsroom switched to teams than it is in showing that quality suffered. In fact, the researchers acknowledge that readers (whom they did not survey) and staffers have differing perspectives on newspaper excellence.

In another study of newsroom teams, John T. Russial used content analysis to study the effect of one topic team at the Portland *Oregonian*.[26] The Health and Science team was formed in 1994 to improve coverage and play of those stories. Russial found that the use of this team at *The Oregonian* did increase the number of stories on this topic overall, the number of staff-written stories and the section-front play of stories. Because *The Oregonian* did not increase newshole at the same time, Russial points out, some news was sacrificed. Russial determined by interviewing an editor that the news left out of the newspaper as a result of the change in news values was routine state legislature stories. Based on anecdotal evidence, Russial also concluded that change was good for morale at the newspaper.[27]

The present study focuses on a different perspective from these earlier studies--that of newspaper managing editors. In surveying these individuals, this project apparently is the first broad, national investigation of teams on U.S. newspapers. And, while the reliance on managing editors provides a new and important perspective, it also limits the investigation to the perceptions of newsroom managers.

Research Questions

Out of the literature and interests of the researchers, the following research questions were developed. 1. How many papers have newsroom teams and what role does circulation size play? 2. What was the process by which teams were developed/implemented? 3. What are the characteristics of teams, including composition and organization? 4. What is the governance or leadership system within the teams? 5. What have been the effects of the move to teams? 6. How is success of team usage measured? 7. What seem to be the strengths and weaknesses of teams? 8. Why do papers that don't have teams say they don't use them?

Research Design

The authors surveyed a census of U.S. newspapers with more than 25,000 daily circulation. An eight-page, pre-tested, questionnaire was sent to the managing editors of 455 newspapers listed in the

1998 Editor & Publisher Yearbook. The questionnaire was mailed in January 1999, with a reminder and a second questionnaire sent four weeks later. A total of 192 usable questionnaires were returned (42.2 percent). By circulation, the returned questionnaires closely followed circulation categories listed in E&P.[28]

Because only one substantive question was asked of all respondents ("Do you have newsroom teams?"), the authors were concerned with overall sample error and degree of confidence only on that question. The return of 192 questionnaires produced a sample error of +/- 5.1 percent at a 95 percent degree of confidence. The papers that said they had teams, thus, became a subsample with a resultant larger sample error.

Two related, but not methodologically synonymous, independent variables were used in most analyses: Circulation, as described above, and Employees, a three-tiered stratum representing the number of full-time newsroom employees. The tiers, with distribution in percentages, were: more than 100 employees--34 percent; 51 to 100 employees--28.7 percent; and 50 or fewer employees--37.2 percent. Appropriate for a descriptive study, data were analyzed by chi square and ANOVA.

Findings

Research Question 1: How many, what configuration. Seventy-one of the 192 responding newspapers (37 percent) said they had a formal team system in place to one degree or another. This was significant by chi square analysis ($p<.004$), with about 53 percent of the large circulation papers having teams, compared with 42 percent of the medium size papers and 25 percent of the small papers.

Some papers were organized totally around a team structure, while others used a combination of teams and traditional beat structures, and sometimes had two team systems operating at once. The two most common newsroom systems involved an on-going group of reporters focusing on specific topic areas (59 percent of respondents) and/or an ad hoc group of reporters, editors and designers who planned and executed specific stories or packages (58 percent). Only about a quarter of the respondents said they used on-going teams that consisted of reporters, editors, designers and photographers.

About eight out of 10 papers that used a team system reported having fewer than 10 teams, most five or fewer. Some 58 percent of the papers reported that half, or less, of their full-time news staffers were involved in teams. Almost 60 percent of the papers said they had started using teams between 1993 and 1996. The rest were pretty evenly split between starting before 1993 (earliest being 1984) and starting in 1997 or 1998.

Table 1

Percentage of Teams Covering Specific Topic/Subject Areas

Topic Area	% Saying Yes
Politics/Government	61.8%
Police/Courts	52.9b
Investigative/Projects/Enterprise	51.5
Education	50.0[ab]
General Assignment/Breaking News	40.3[ab]
Business/Economics/Consumerism	38.2
Sports/Outdoor	36.0
Entertainment (Art/Books/TV/Movies/Music)	35.3
Medicine/Health	29.4
Leisure (Travel, Fashion)	25.0
Urban Development/Transportation/Construction	25.0
Family/Home/Food	23.5
Religion	20.6
Geographic Area Coverage	19.1
Environment	17.6[b]
Science/Technology	17.6

[a] significant with Circulation by x^2 at $p < .05$
[b] significant with Employees by x^2 at $p < .05$

Papers were asked what subjects, or topic areas, their teams covered. As Table 1 shows, the top four were politics/government, police/courts, investigative/projects, and education. Interestingly, there were few statistically significant differences by Circulation or Employees, indicating that most papers with topic teams use the same ones. Significance appeared on three items and indicated that smaller papers were less likely to have teams in those areas.

Research Question 2: Implementation Process. The idea to switch to a team structure originated, overwhelmingly, with local news management. In more than 83 percent of the switches, that was the case, compared to a total of less than 17 percent for group ownership, local corporate management or newsroom staffers.

And, in most instances, respondents said the switch was made to produce stories more relevant to readers. Papers were asked to rate from "very important" to "not at all important" eight reasons to switch. As Table 2 indicates, the only other reasons that came close to "producing relevant stories" were using staff more efficiently and developing more complex articles. Interestingly, there were no statistically significant differences (by ANOVA) by Circulation or Employees, indicating motivations behind changing systems apparently were consistent regardless of newspaper size.

Table 2
Reasons Given to Switch to Team System
(1=Very Important, 5=Not At All Important)

Reason	Mean Rating
Produce Stories More Relevant to Readers	1.45
Use Staff More Efficiently	1.94
Develop More Complex Stories	2.02
Increase Paper's Circulation	2.91
Produce More Stories	3.22
Keep Up With Changing Technology	3.84
Increase Paper's Advertising	4.32
Increase Paper's Profits	4.33

Respondents were divided fairly evenly on how the change was accomplished. Some 56 percent said the team system was introduced and implemented over time, in stages, sometimes as long as a year or more; the rest said the change in structure took place somewhat more abruptly. Specifically, almost 60 percent of the papers reported that the team system was implemented in less than six months. A fourth of them said six months to a year, and the rest said longer than a year.

Almost all papers that reported introducing teams over time said that was the more appropriate, efficient way to do so. About 5 percent of the papers that implemented teams all at once said that, with the luxury of 20/20 hindsight, putting teams in place over time probably was a better idea.

The switch to teams was not accompanied by a great deal of other kinds of change. About a quarter of the papers said the establishment of teams coincided with other management-instituted changes, such as starting pagination or adopting "maestro" or "WED" systems. Similarly, only 25 percent of the papers reported that the newsroom was renovated or reconfigured to accommodate the team system.

If moving to a team structure did not bring about many physical changes to newsrooms, nor did the change cause wholesale alterations in staff titles or result in the elimination of many layers of management. Less than 10 percent of the papers changed the title of the managing editor; slightly more than 40 percent of the papers said the title of city editor or assistant city editor was changed, usually to something like "team leader." In addition, 63 percent of the papers said no layers of management were eliminated/lost in the change. Some 21 percent said one layer was lost, and 15 percent said two or more layers were eliminated.

More than 70 percent of the papers said their newsrooms weren't unionized, so that wasn't a factor in the switch. Of the few papers that reported being unionized, all said the union was helpful or played no role.

Research Question 3: Team characteristics, including composition and organization. Respondents were given a list of newsroom employees (reporter, copy editor, artist/designer, photographer, supervisory editor and other) and asked to indicate which positions were represented on teams. Most often, it was reported, teams were made up of reporters and supervisory editors. Respondents recommended four as the minimum size and eight as the maximum size for efficiency. The median team size reported in this study was six. Editors noted that team members usually remained on a team for more than one year.

Forty-four percent of the papers also said staffers could be on more than one team, but normally this was only on a temporary basis.

The editors were asked if there were certain characteristics of individuals that seemed to make them better team members. Seventy-six percent of the editors responding said that there were and listed characteristics that could be grouped as the ability to work with others (41 percent of the responses), openness to change (23 percent), a strong work ethic (20 percent), humility (11 percent) and other responses (5 percent).

Some 32 percent of the respondents said their teams had written goals or mission statements. They also reported that teams members relied on regularly scheduled meetings and talking with each other to coordinate work between teams. They relied largely on meetings to communicate with section editors and upper management.

In terms of training, 74 percent of the papers' staffs received a week or less of training before teams were organized. Most of the training was in teamwork (53 percent), leadership (39 percent) and interpersonal skills (39 percent). Editors reported more training was needed in the same areas, with leadership training needing the most (41 percent), followed by teamwork (39 percent) and interpersonal skills (31 percent). Only a handful of papers used an outside consultant to do the training.

Research Question 4: Team governance/leadership. In most cases – 68 percent – a supervisory editor was reported to be the team leader. Table 3 lists responsibilities of that team leader. Forty-two percent of the editors said formal coaching was a part of the team structure, and 45 percent identified the team leader as the coach.

Table 3
Responsibilities of Team Leader
(% of Respondents Saying 'Yes')

Task	Pct. 'Yes'
Assign Stories	90.8%
First Edit on Stories	89.2%
Liaison with Management	87.7%
Coach Writers	86.2%
Enforce Quality Standards	80.0%
Enforce Deadlines	78.5%
Reporting and Writing	23.4%
Design pages	12.3%
Taking Photos/Creating Graphics	7.7%

Most respondents (55 percent) said news staffers had a large amount of input on team assignments, but, in response to open-ended questions, they also indicated that the managing editor and city editor decided who would be on each team and who would lead the teams. The editors were asked how they handled a staffer's request to change teams, and they reported that they handled it like any other request for a reassignment, e.g., wait for an opening, allow the employee to swap jobs with another employee or have the department head decide.

The editors estimated that their teams generate, on average, 90 percent of the story ideas they tackle. Most of the respondents (71 percent) reported that the teams attempted to operate by consensus and if consensus couldn't be reached, the team leader decided what to do.

Research Question 5: Effects of the move to newsroom teams. Results were measured by a set of scaled questions on perceived attitudes, stress and effects, along with three questions on morale. Generally, the managing editors saw many more positives than negatives, as Table 4 shows.

On a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1=Strongly Agree and 5=Strongly Disagree, the managing editors showed strongest agreement with the statement that top management, i.e., themselves and their top associates, liked the team concept. They demonstrated less agreement on statements that middle management and line staff (reporters, copy editors, photographers) liked the system.

On statements pertaining to increased stress for city editors, reporters, photographers, etc., and on statements about less staff autonomy and decreased opportunities for promotion, the editors showed even more reluctance to agree.

Table 4
Reactions to Teams by Mean
1=Strongly Agree 5=Strongly Disagree

Statement	Mean Response
Top news management likes team concept	1.864[d]
Young staff like team concept	2.169
Middle management (team leaders, section editors) like team concept	2.242
Staff members (reporters, copy editors) like team concept	2.344
Stress on middle managers has increased	2.723
Stress on reporters, copy editors, photographers has increased	3.250
Many staff members miss the autonomy of traditional newsroom	3.492
Staff members see less opportunity for promotion	3.645

[d] ANOVA significant by Employees $p<.05$

On the questions about morale, no respondent said top management morale had decreased; indeed, 28 percent said it had increased. About 40 percent said mid-management and staff morale had increased; 13 percent said mid-management morale had decreased. Only 3 percent said staff morale had decreased.

Research Question 6: Measuring teams' success. Respondents were asked to rate elements as to their importance in measuring the success of teams on their newspapers. As Table 5 shows, the

Table 5
How Success of Teams is Measured
1=very important measure 5=not at all important measure

Measure	**Mean**
More/better coverage of topic area	1.311
The editor's opinion	2.093
Informal reader feedback	2.155
Informal staff comments	2.179
Surveys of readers	2.188
Making deadlines	2.380
Amount of stories produced	2.556
Circulation increase	2.565
Higher circulation penetration	2.810
Awards won by staff	2.911
Surveys of staff	3.300
Evaluation of MBOs	3.611
Increased profits	4.184

measures of success identified by the editors as most important were more, or better, coverage in a given topic area, the editor's opinion and informal reader and staff feedback. Least important was increased profits. Sixty-four percent of the editors recommended waiting a year or more to determine the effectiveness of teams.

Another effect of moving to a team structure -- rewarding individuals for team successes -- seems to be a fairly widely accepted practice. More than 60 percent of the editors said such rewards were given, usually in the shape of bonuses and/or awards, but not raises.

Table 6
Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of Teams, in Percentages

A = More true with teams
B = About same for teams or traditional beat structure
C = More true with traditional beat structure

Statement	A	B	C
Staff members interact more	77.7%	19.7%	3.3%
Paper is better planned	73.3	23.2	3.3
Overall, readers get a better paper	71.0	24.2	4.8
Stories better written because they're discussed before deadline	71.4	22.2	6.3
News is packaged better	64.4	32.2	3.4
Staff members are cross trained and learn new skills	56.1	42.1	1.8
Paper is better designed	55.2	41.4	3.4
Reporters write across paper, not just for one section	54.2	40.7	5.1
Stories are more authoritative	50.8	46.0	3.2
Staff members show more initiative	50.8	40.7	8.5
Communication between middle and top management better	46.6	48.3	5.2
Accuracy is better	39.0	55.9	5.1
Communication between reporters & copy editors better	32.1	64.3	3.6
We emphasize soft news too much	28.8	62.7	8.5
It takes more staff	28.8	61.0	10.2
Stories fall between the cracks	33.9	50.8	15.3
It's easier to implement changes	33.3	51.7	15.0
Copy editors more satisfied because their work is more varied	21.4	71.4	7.1
Decision making is slower	35.6	40.7	23.7
Communication between shifts is a problem	17.5	70.2	12.3
Paper is breaking more news	27.4	48.4	24.2
Reps/copy eds less likely to be disciplined for missing deadlines	10.7	80.4	8.9
Design is emphasized over content	8.6	84.5	6.9
We respond better to breaking news	29.0	41.9	29.0
The amount of copy per reporter is greater	28.8	42.4	28.2
Less competent staffers bring down overall quality of coverage	10.3	69.0	20.7
General assignment is covered adequately	19.4	48.4	32.3
Top newsroom management micromanages stories	11.9	62.7	25.4

Research Question 7: Perceived strengths and weaknesses of teams. Managing editors thought the team system presented far more strengths than the traditional beat-oriented newsroom. We presented them with 28 scenarios, or newsroom situations/outcomes, and asked them if the scenarios were more likely to occur under a team structure, in a traditional newsroom setting, or whether it didn't make much difference. Table 6 shows the results.

Overwhelmingly, editors said the team system produced: more staff interaction, a better planned and packaged paper, better written stories, and, overall, a better paper for readers. They were only slightly less enthusiastic about teams for: permitting cross training of staff; allowing reporters to write across the paper; developing authoritative stories; and allowing staff to show more initiative.

Indeed, there were only five scenarios where the managing editors said they were as likely, or more likely, to occur under a traditional beat-centered newsroom system: responding to breaking news and covering general assignment; reporters producing more copy; less competent staffers bringing down overall coverage quality; and, top newsroom management micromanaging stories.

Among negative scenarios presented -- too much emphasis on soft news, stories falling between the cracks, slower decision making, takes too large a staff -- respondents granted that those could happen under a team system, but most indicated they were just as likely to occur under either system.

Research Question 8: No, Thank You. Papers that said they did not use a team system gave four primary reasons, three seemingly closely related.

Smaller papers, especially, said their size (most less than 50,000 circulation) was the major reason. Common themes included too few people, too large an area to cover, and too much staff turnover.

The rest of the non-team papers' responses could be divided roughly in thirds. There were those who like/trust/believe in the traditional beat system. They have nothing *against* teams so much as they have a great deal they like about their current structure. They are satisfied with the chain of command in place, and they believe the beat system is effective and efficient.

At the other end of the spectrum is a group of papers that dislike the team concept and/or structure, and they dislike it for specific reasons. Common themes include lack of accountability, failure to adequately cover general assignment or breaking news, lower staff production, and inefficiency in managing staff members.

Finally, there is a group somewhere in between these two. These papers seem to have nothing specific against teams; they just haven't given them much consideration. Most said no one had suggested such a switch, or that they weren't too informed about the system, or that they felt teams were a fad.

Only two papers reported having had a team structure and returning to the traditional beat system. Both said the team system had "not worked out" for them. And, only a relative handful of papers (11) said they planned to move to a team system, most in the next 6-12 months.

Discussion

There are eight important findings in this study.

First, while teams have been a subject of intense discussion among newspaper professionals in the 1990s, there seems to have been no data on just how widespread their use is. This study gives a baseline: 37 percent of newspapers with a circulation more than 25,000 use some form of teams.

Most common are ad hoc teams for special projects and topic-oriented teams consisting of a group of reporters and editors. About 60 percent of papers with teams said they had each kind. (A number of papers said they had both.)

If we look at the data in a different way, about 20 percent of <u>all</u> newspapers reported those kinds of teams. The data suggest that about 40 percent of newspapers with a circulation of more than 100,000 use reporter-editor teams and about 30 percent use ad hoc teams. Comparable numbers for smaller papers are considerably lower.

Second, the data does show a rapid growth in the use of teams in the 1990s. Only 8 percent of managing editors said their newspapers had started the use of teams by 1992. Thirty-five newspapers started teams in the next three years so that by 1995, 28 percent of newspapers were using some form of teams. Thirteen more papers said they had started teams by 1998, and 11 said they planned to start teams within the next year. If that happens, 42 percent of newspapers would have teams at the end of 1999.

Even though these numbers occurred a decade later than Lawler's study of American businesses in general, they remarkably parallel the growth Lawler found. In 1987, 27 percent of companies reported using teams; three years later, in 1990, 47 percent of companies reported using teams. Lawler's findings showed use of teams growing to 70 percent three years later. Whether newsrooms, generally much smaller operations than typical American businesses, will continue to track that growth is unclear.

Third, editors differ from corporate executives in how they rank the reasons for going to a team structure. The primary reason given by editors is a statement about quality, and the secondary reason is a statement about productivity. Business executives rank productivity first and quality second. Increasing profits was rated last in editors' thinking in creating teams. Even circulation growth rated below quality concerns. When editors listed how they evaluated teams, increased profits again were last, and better coverage was first.

This avoidance of the profit incentive is not completely a surprise. Newsrooms don't directly produce revenue, and many news people have always said they answered the calling to serve the public, not to serve the shareholder. (It is interesting to note that the top four ways editors said they evaluated teams – better coverage, the editor's opinion, informal reader feedback and informal staff comments – are among the hardest to measure.)

Fourth, for the most part, papers seem to have made a somewhat cautious, conservative switch to teams. For example, many papers that reported having teams, also noted that they weren't fully committed to a team system in the newsroom. Many retained elements of the traditional newsroom, producing a mixed structure, a hybrid newsroom environment.

In addition, relatively few of the papers reported using broad, theme-based, inter-beat approaches to coverage, opting instead for the familiarity of traditional beat system terminology and organization. Most team "topic areas" are interchangeable with the beat assignments in any newsroom in the country: politics, cops, courts, education, business, sports.

And, most papers using ongoing teams reported their teams were composed of several reporters and a city editor or assistant city editor with the new title "Team Leader." As opposed to other segments of corporate America, few papers reported using a standing, cross-functional form of teams where reporters, copy editors, designers, photographers and a supervising editor work together on stories from the time of idea conceptualization or assignment. The cross-functional teams that focus on creative consultation and collaboration are temporary in most newsrooms.

Fifth, the composition of teams reflects an evolutionary, not revolutionary, adaptation of teams in newsrooms. About two-thirds of teams are headed by a supervisory editor. The most common functions of the team leader almost perfectly reflect the traditional functions of city editors and their assistants: assigning stories, doing the first edit, communicating with upper management and enforcing deadlines. However, the title of city editor may be vanishing; about 40 percent of papers with teams have renamed that job.

Of major use to newspapers thinking about creating teams is the strong agreement among papers on the recommended size of teams – between four and eight. (The average found in the study was right in the middle – six.)

Sixth, the lack of numerous statistically significant differences often is anathema to researchers. Quite the opposite is true in this study. While the overall lack of statistical significance could be a factor of sample size, independent variables selected, or chance, we aren't that concerned. Indeed, we think there might be a much more telling conclusion drawn. That is, for the most part, those papers with teams think and act very much the same, regardless of newspaper circulation or staff size. The absence of significant differences indicates that team-oriented papers use the same structures, the same team subject areas, the same measures of success across circulation and personnel levels. Generally, they agree on the team system's strengths and weaknesses and the reasons for switching to teams.

Seventh, editors in this study had a stake in their newspapers' moving to a team structure, Still, their reactions to teams showed a greater than expected satisfaction with the team concept. The editors' perspective differed from that of newspaper staffs reported by Hansen *et al* who found that morale suffered at the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* and *St. Paul Pioneer Press* after a team structure was instituted. This study indicates that the findings in Minneapolis-St. Paul – that staffers said they believed the quality of the newspaper had declined while production time needed had increased – are not necessarily true at newspapers nationwide. Editors indicated they and their staffs approved of the team concept and denied the increase in stress that was indicated by anecdotal descriptions of team structure in Portland and other cities. These are, of course, perceptions of editors, not responses from mid-managers, reporters or copy editors.

And, finally, the editors' perceptions of strengths and weaknesses also showed greater appreciation for teams than the literature would suggest. The statements in Table 6 were drawn from academic and professional journal articles about teams and from editors' comments at conferences. The results are not consistent with the Hansen study, which found the effect on news processes and news quality to be mixed, but predominantly negative. One concern of editors in this study, however, that general assignment be covered adequately, was reflected in Stepp's descriptive article on reinventing the newsroom. Overall, editors disagreed with the criticism of teams.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study has uncovered important baseline information about the state of "teams" on American newspapers today. Still, its limitations and the new questions it has raised invite further research. More could be learned, for example, about teams by replicating this survey in a few years to ascertain future patterns of team development. Additional work also is needed in the area of staff reaction to teams, i.e., the Hanson study needs to be expanded. Russial's work on content analysis also could be expanded to more than one newspaper and by looking at coverage in more than one topic area before and after the inception of teams. Also helpful would be a survey of managing editors with teams and managing editors in traditional newsrooms to discover similarities and differences in the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the two organizational structures.

Notes

[1] Jack D. Orsburn, Linda Moran, Ed Musselwhite and John H. Zenger, *Self-Directed Work Teams: The New American Challenge*. Homewood, Illinois: Business One Irwin, 1990, p. 8.

[2] Peter F. Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1974, pp. 558-564.

[3] Michael Hammer and James Champy, *Reengineering the Corporation: A Manifesto for Business Revolution*. New York: HarperBusiness, 1993, pp. 35-36.

[4] Orsburn et al., *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[5] Edward E. Lawler III, Susan Albers Mohrman and Gerald E. Ledford, Jr., *Employee Involvement and Total Quality Management: Practices and Results in Fortune 1000 Companies.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992, p. 1.

[6] Glenn H. Varney, *Building Productive Teams: An Action Guide and Resource Book.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1989, p xiii.

[7] W. Edwards Deming, *Out of the Crisis.* Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for Advanced Engineering Study, 1986, pp. 23-24.

[8] Their survey asked about a range of practices grouped as Employee Involvement and Total Quality Management, which the authors describe as distinct but complementary practices. In addition to self-managing teams, the authors include in Employee Involvement quality circles, job enrichment, gain sharing and profit sharing systems (pay systems and power sharing programs), p. xvii. Total Quality Management programs include such programs as self-inspection, work simplification, cost-of-quality monitoring, direct employee exposure to customers and collaboration with suppliers on quality efforts, p. 95.

[9] Lawler et al., p. xviii.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 28. Lawler et al., *Creating High Performance Organizations: Practices and Results of Employee Involvement and Total Quality Management in Fortune 1000 Companies.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995, p. 20, 28.

[12] *Ibid.*, 1995, p. 135.

[13] "Harvard Plans to Retool MBA Curriculum," *USA Today*, Nov. 9, 1993, p. 1B.

[14] Timothy D. Schellhardt, "To Be a Star Among Equals, Be a Team Player," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 20, 1994, p. B1.

[15] Susan Albers Morhman, Jay R. Galbraith, Edward E. Lawler III and Associates, *Tomorrow's Organization: Crafting Winning Capabilities in a Dynamic World.* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998, 206-207.

[16] Jason Berger, "Brainstorming: We Can Teach 'Creativity,'" *Teaching Public Relations 28*, September 1992, p. 2.

[17] Paul McMasters, *15 Management Techniques*, *Newsroom Management Handbook*, Washington, D.C.: American Society of Newspapers Editors Foundation, 1985, pp. 1-5.

[18] Mario Garcia, *Contemporary Newspaper Design: A Structural Approach*, 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1993, p. 21.

[19] Buck Ryan, *The Maestro Concept: A New Approach to Writing and Editing for the Newspaper of the Future*, a report prepared for the Annual Convention of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Baltimore, Md., March 30-April 2, 1993, pp. 2-3.

[20] Carl Sessions Stepp, *Reinventing the Newsroom, American Journalism Review*, April 1995, pp. 28-33.

[21] Perhaps the delay stems from newspaper managers' perception of their companies as local monopolies that haven't had to be competitive. This is the explanation of one industry official for why newspapers were a decade behind other industries in adopting other management strategies. See Gene Goltz, "Human Resources Specialists," ***Presstime***, July 1990, pp. 18-19.

[22] Rebecca Ross Albers, "Profiles in Journalism: The 'Lone Cowboy' Gives Way to the Modern Journalist," *Presstime on-line*, April 1996 <http://www.naa.org/presstime/96/PTIME/modjour.html>.

[23] Gary Graham and Tracy Thompson, *Inside Newsroom Teams: An Editor's Guide to the Promise and Problems*. Evanston, Ill.: NMC, 1997.

[24] Regina Louise Lewis, "How Managerial Evolution Affects Newspaper Firms," *Newspaper Research Journal*, Winter-Spring 1997, pp. 103-125.

[25] Kathleen A. Hansen, Mark Neuzil and Jean Ward, *Newsroom Topic Teams: Journalists' Assessments of Effects on News Routines and Newspaper Quality*, paper presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Chicago, Ill., August 1997.

[26] John T. Russial, "Topic-Team Performance: A Content Study," *Newspaper Research Journal*, Winter-Spring 1997, pp. 126-144.

[27] Russial's conclusion about morale may have been hasty. *Oregonian* executive editor Sandra Mims Rowe told the Freedom Forum Newspaper Training Editors Conference in San Francisco in May 1997 that flattening the newsroom structure from one in which there were seven layers of editors between reporters and her to one in which there are now two layers was difficult. In fact, it took a stormy newsroom retreat to iron out problems at the newspaper. See Jack Hart, unpublished manuscript, *The Will to Change: A Management History of The Oregonian*, September 1995.

[28] Editor & Publisher circulation categories, as a percentage of all papers of more than 25,000 circulation, were: more than 100,000--23.3 percent; 50,001 to 100,000--29.4 percent; and 25,001-50,000--47.3 percent. Survey returns by the same circulation categories were: more than 100,000--25.8 percent; 50,001 to 100,000--29.4 percent; and 25,001 to 50,000--47.9 percent.

Hispanics & the Media: A Case Study of Coverage in *The Dallas Morning News*

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Introduction

Both media critics and Hispanic Americans[1] themselves have long argued that general market (mainstream) media coverage of Hispanics and the issues important to them is biased.[2] Not only is the amount of attention given to Hispanics deemed insufficient, but critics say that the news which is reported often misrepresents Latinos and fosters stereotypes.[3] A common complaint is that the coverage U.S. media give to Hispanic Americans is too often linked to crime and violence instead of to Hispanics' productive roles in society.[4] Others maintain that news stories often focus on Hispanics as "problem people" who cause or are beset by problems.[5]

Some recent media research supports these claims. For instance, a 1995 content analysis of the three major broadcast networks (ABC, CBS and NBC) and CNN found that only 121 stories (or 1 percent of the sample) focused on Latinos or issues related to Latinos. And of those items, 85 percent fell into one of four content categories: crime,

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[1]Throughout this paper, the terms Hispanic Americans, Hispanics and Latinos are used interchangeably.
[2]J. V. Turk, J. Richstad, R. L. Bryson, Jr., and S. M. Johnson, "Hispanic Americans in the News in Two Southwestern Cities," *Journalism Quarterly,* 66:107-113 (1989); A. Tan, "Evaluations of Newspapers and Television by Blacks and Mexican Americans," *Journalism Quarterly*, 55:637-681 (1978).
[3]C. A. Ericksen, "Hispanic Americans and the Press," *Journal of Intergroup Relations*, 9(1):3-16 (1981); M. L. Stein, "Racial Stereotyping and the Media," *Editor & Publisher*, 127:12 (1994); M. Fitzgerald, "State of Hispanic America: National Council of La Raza Says Negative Stereotyping by Both Hollywood and News Organizations is Holding Down Latino Progress in Civil Rights, Education, Housing and the Economy," *Editor & Publisher*, 127:11 (1994); D. Gersh, "Portrayals of Latinos in and by the Media," Editor & Publisher, 126:12 (1993); L. Navarrete and C. Kamasaki, "Out of the Picture: Hispanics in the Media. The State of Hispanic America 1994," (Washington, D.C.: National Council of La Raza/1994).
[4]F. Calvo-Roth, "The Good and the Bad (Press Coverage of Hispanic Americans)," *Hispanic,* 5:80 (1992).
[5]Turk et al.

immigration, affirmative action or welfare.[6] Hispanics were rarely pictured on camera as sources. A 1996 follow-up study found little change. Again just 1 percent of content qualified as Latino, and no Hispanic experts were interviewed for these stories.

Studies examining the content of newspapers present a slightly more positive picture. For instance, a 1983 study of six Southwestern dailies found that the proportion of the newshole devoted to Hispanics and Hispanic issues tended to match the proportion of Hispanics in each city's population.[7] This same study determined that crime was not overemphasized in these newspapers. But sports news did outpace other types of Hispanic content. Similarly, the study of two Southwestern dailies during the early-1980s by Turk et al. showed that the proportion of Latino content in those papers corresponded roughly with the Latino presence in their communities. In fact, the researchers reported, Hispanics were represented more equitably than in the past. However, the data from both studies is more than a decade old. And two studies hardly present a definitive picture.

Likewise, little work exists that looks at Hispanics' use of and attitudes toward general market (mainstream) U.S. media. In terms of media use, Subervi-Velez has identified a positive correlation between Latinos' use of general market media and their degree of assimilation into U.S. society.[8] Similarly, Nicolini found that opinion leaders within the Puerto Rican community in Philadelphia believed Spanish-language media only partially fulfilled the needs of the community.[9] They charged that it left a gap in the

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[6]R. Carveth and D. Alverio, *Network Brownout: The Portrayal of Latinos in Network Television News* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Hispanic Journalists/National Council of La Raza, 1996/7).
[7]B. S. Greenberg, C. Heeter, J. K. Burgoon, M. Burgoon and F. Korzenny, "Local Newspaper Coverage of Mexican Americans," *Journalism Quarterly*, 60:671-676 (1983).
[8]F. Subervi-Velez, "Hispanics, the Mass Media and Politics: Assimilation vs. Pluralism," Doctoral dissertation, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin: 336.
[9]P. Nicolini, "Philadelphia Puerto Rican Community Leaders' Perceptions of Spanish-Language Media," *Mass Communication Review*, 13(1-2):11-17.

coverage of news about the city beyond their neighborhood -- a gap that most likely would be filled by general market media.

Like the research discussed above, the study presented here sought to examine Hispanic coverage in another large Southwestern newspaper, *The Dallas Morning News*, which has a strong regional presence and a daily circulation of over half a million. As the fastest growing minority group in the country, Hispanics represent a particularly appealing source of potential readers to newspapers that are watching their circulation bases dwindle. This is especially true in the Southwest. 1990 U.S. Census figures and population estimates show that in 1995 when this research was conducted, Dallas-Fort Worth was home to the nation's ninth largest Hispanic population and represented the fourth largest Hispanic population in Texas. The total Hispanic population in the North Texas area at that time was estimated at around 657,000 (13 percent of total population). By 2000, that number is expected to grow to 920,000 (40 percent of the population).

Given the importance of the Hispanic market in the Southwest today, this study also sought to look at Hispanic readers' (and nonreaders') attitudes toward *The Dallas Morning News*, both as a general news source and as a source of Hispanic coverage. With this in mind, researchers developed a study plan involving three phases. The first two -- a series of eight focus groups and a telephone survey -- explored Hispanics' attitudes toward *The Morning News* and other media as well as their media-use behaviors. The third phase, a content analysis, was designed to systematically evaluate both the quantity and quality of *The Dallas Morning News*' coverage of Hispanics and Hispanic issues as well as determine how closely that content actually matches Hispanics' sense of how they are portrayed. What follows is an overall descriptive analysis of the breadth of the findings. Although the quantitative data can clearly be plumbed more deeply through bivariate and multivariate analyses, here the three methodologies (focus groups, survey and content analysis) provide different but complementary pieces of the puzzle.

Methodology

The focus groups were conducted in July 1995. The eight groups were designed to explore frequency of reading as well as the influence of gender and language preference on reading habits. Infrequent readers (those who read 1 to 2 times per week or less often) of *The News* were divided into four groups based on gender and language preference. Each group included a mix of ages from 18 to 54. Frequent readers (those who read 3 or more times per week, including both subscribers and nonsubscribers) also were divided into four groups based on the same criteria. The 58 participants represented all walks of life -- including a good cross-section of both blue-collar workers and professionals, singles and married people with children. They also represented a range of nationalities -- although most were American-born citizens of Mexican ancestry, there were several who had been born in Mexico or other Latin countries.

In the second phase of the study, a survey was developed to more systematically explore the trends found in focus groups. Between Oct. 31 and Dec. 2, 1995, 741 Hispanic adults in four North Texas counties -- Dallas, Collin, Denton and eastern Tarrant counties -- were interviewed by bilingual telephone interviewers. To identify Hispanic households, a dual sampling frame was employed, using both a listed Hispanic surname sample and a random digit dialing sample drawn from high-density Hispanic areas. Overall margin of error for the poll was 3.5.

In the third phase of the study, content analysis was used to determine how Hispanics are portrayed in *The Dallas Morning News*. All issues of *The News* from July of 1995 were analyzed for Hispanic-related content, including coverage both of Hispanics in the United States and of Spanish-speaking countries. This sampling frame was selected based on previous studies which suggest that this time frame should provide an acceptable number of stories and photographs.[10] July was chosen primarily because that was the

[10]The Turk et al. study looked at 27 issues of each of two newspapers; the Greenberg et

month when the focus groups were held. Availability was also a consideration. As a result, sampling coincided with the professional baseball season, a sport with many Hispanic players. In addition, the annual conference of the National Council of La Raza took place in Dallas the second week of July. These factors should be kept in mind when interpreting the content analysis results.

Four University of Texas students were hired as coders. All four speak Spanish and know something about Hispanic culture. Two are Hispanic, one is married to a Hispanic, and one has lived and studied in Latin America. To measure the reliability of both the coders and the coding instrument, an intercoder-reliability score was calculated using the results of a pretest. This score essentially reflects the number of coding decisions on which coders agreed. Intercoder reliability should be 80 percent or more. The score calculated for this study was 83 percent.

Focus Group Results

Participants were asked a range of questions, from what they thought of *Morning News* coverage overall to what they thought of the paper's Hispanic coverage to what other news sources they used to which news sources they preferred, English-language or Spanish-language. Overall, these primarily Mexican-American participants:

*were divided over whether *The Morning News* should include Spanish-language content;

*indicated that the Spanish-language broadcast networks Univision and Telemundo were important sources of international news;

*said that *TDMN* does not cover some international topics of interest to them (many male participants complained about the lack of international soccer coverage, for instance);

*cited the most common reason among all ethnic groups for not reading: lack of time (this was especially true for women, which follows the pattern for all

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al. study examined two weeks' worth of issues of each of six newspapers.

ethnicities, but traditional gender roles and the subsequent division of labor may make this more of an obstacle for Hispanic women);

*said Sunday was a favorite day for reading: "On Sunday we rest, so that's when we have time to read";

*criticized *TDMN* for "unbalanced coverage of events involving Hispanics," saying that drugs, gangs and violent crime are overemphasized and that the accomplishments of Hispanics receive little attention; and

*said that although they think *TDMN* is a good newspaper, they do not think it is a newspaper for Hispanics primarily because *TDMN* has little news about Hispanics, no Spanish-language content and, they believed, few Hispanic employees.

Survey Results

Respondent profile

Of the 741 individuals surveyed, 55 percent were male and 45 percent female. In terms of age, the data clearly mirror 1990 U.S. Census data which show that Hispanics in the Dallas-Fort Worth area tend to be younger than the general population (see Table 1). For instance, 60 percent of the adult Hispanics surveyed were between 18 and 34 years old. Only 10 percent were 55 or older. As shown in Table 2, slightly less than a third had attended or graduated from college, lower than the national average for all ethnic groups. And as shown in Table 3, about a third of the Hispanics surveyed had household incomes below $20,000. As one might expect in Texas, the vast majority, 84 percent, of the respondents were of Mexican descent (see Table 4).

Table 1: Age of respondents

Age	**Total respondents (N=741)**
18-24	23%
25-34	37
35-44	20
45-54	10
55-64	5
65 & over	5

Table 2: Respondents' education

Education	Total respondents (N=741)
Some elementary	9%
Completed elementary	7
Some junior high/high school	20
Completed high school	29
Some university/college	18
University/college graduate	13
Post graduate	1
Don't know/refused	1

Table 3: Household income

Income	Total respondents (N=741)
Less than $15,000	16%
$15,000-$19,999	16
$20,000-$29,000	17
$30,000-$39,999	13
$40,000-$49,999	7
$50,000-$74,999	11
$75,000 and over	6
Refused	14

Table 4: Origin or descent

Origin/descent	Total respondents (N=741)
Mexican	84%
Puerto Rican	4
El Salvadoran	3
Cuban	1
Other Hispanic origin	6
Refused	2

Language preference

Many media professionals and researchers today agree that since the Latino community is bilingual, information should be imparted in both languages to better serve and appeal to Latinos. As a result, several survey questions addressed this dimension of Latino media use, including language ability and preference. For instance, as Table 5 shows, when asked what language they usually speak at home, 42 percent of respondents said they use Spanish more than English, compared with 36 percent who speak English more than Spanish. Another 22 percent said they use both languages equally.

Table 5: Language spoken at home

	Total respondents (N=741)
Spanish all the time	25%
	1700%
Spanish & English equally	2200%
English more than Spanish	
English all the time	

Table 6: Ability to read English/Spanish

	Total respondents (N=741)
Spanish all the time	25%
Spanish more than English	17
Spanish & English equally	22
English more than Spanish	18
English all the time	18

In terms of reading ability, approximately the same number of respondents feel comfortable reading both Spanish and English. As shown in Table 6, 75 percent said they found English very or somewhat easy to read, versus 78 percent who said Spanish was very or somewhat easy to read. Not surprisingly, given these findings, respondents used both English- and Spanish-language media, with the largest percentages relying on Spanish-language broadcast outlets for their news.

When respondents identified as readers of *TDMN* were asked what, if any, portion of the paper should be in Spanish, well over half (66 percent) said there should be some content in Spanish. A quarter believed there should be no content in Spanish, and 1 percent believed all the content should be in Spanish. Readers who preferred Spanish were more likely to say there should be some content in Spanish.

Table 7: Media use

Medium	**Total respondents (N=741)**
TDMN weekdays	32%
TDMN Saturdays	25
TDMN Sundays	37
El Sol de Texas	22
Other Spanish-language newspapers	14
Spanish-language TV	77
Spanish-language radio	68

Hispanics in Dallas-Fort Worth do appear to read *TDMN* less than the general public. For instance, as Table 7 indicates, 32 percent of Hispanics said they read *TDMN* on an average weekday compared with half of the general public in *TDMN* circulation market. Similarly, on most Saturdays, one-fourth of Hispanics read versus half of the general market. Even on Sunday when focus group participants said they were most likely to read, reading was lower among Hispanics than among the general population. Some 37 percent of Hispanic survey respondents said they read *TDMN* most Sundays compared with 66 percent of the general public. The most frequently cited reason for not reading *TDMN* was the same one cited by other reader groups: lack of time. Six in 10 said this was why they didn't read. Approximately one in 10 said they do not read *TDMN* because they have trouble reading English.

Topics of interest to Hispanic readers

The topics that Hispanic *Morning News* readers (respondents who had read *TDMN* within the past week) said they are most interested in reflect a strong interest in local coverage. For instance, 84 percent of readers said they are somewhat or very interested in education and local school administration (see Table 8). This rings true since nearly nine in 10 respondents have school-age children. Readers also expressed an interest in local crime news, including gang activity (80 percent) and drug use (71 percent). (Focus group participants criticized *TDMN* for focusing too much on Hispanic involvement with gangs and drugs.) Readers were also interested in traditional "Hispanic" issues such as immigration (70 percent) and news of Mexico and other Latin American countries (approximately 70 percent in both cases). Finally, despite the fact that focus group participants criticized *TDMN* for failing to cover international soccer, only four out of 10 readers were somewhat or very interested in this topic.

Survey results also suggest that Hispanic readers pay attention to newspaper stories that have an "Hispanic link" (see Table 9). For instance, nearly nine in 10 said they would read a story in *TDMN* if it dealt with issues that involve Hispanics. Around eight in 10 would read a story if they noticed it referred to Hispanic culture or customs, focused on Hispanic individuals or was about a Hispanic organization. Nearly seven in 10 would read a story that contained a Spanish surname or referred to a Spanish-speaking country.

Table 8: Topics of interest to Hispanic readers of *TDMN* (N=393)

Topics of interest	Very interested	Very/somewhat interested
Education & local school administration	58%	84%
Local gang activity	50	80
The use, sale or trade of illegal drugs	40	71
Housing & neighborhood issues	39	73
Immigration	38	70
News from Mexico	34	70
News from other Latin American countries	27	66
International soccer	18	40
Boxing	26	54
Other sports	47	74

Table 9: Hispanic links to content interest among readers of *TDMN*

Would read a story in TDMN if it:	**Total Hispanic readers (N=393)**
deals with issues that involve Hispanics	85%
refers to Hispanic culture or customs	81
focuses on Hispanic individuals	78
is about Hispanic organizations	77
contains Spanish surnames	68
refers to Spanish-speaking countries	68

Content Analysis Results

On average, "Hispanic coverage" was found to represent about 5 percent of *Dallas Morning News* coverage during the month of July. Coders identified a total of 112 photographs and 489 "news items" -- an umbrella term for stories, columns, news briefs, etc. -- that qualified as Hispanic coverage. Weekly zoned sections were excluded from the study. All other sections of the newspaper, including occasional special sections, were analyzed.

Five criteria were used to identify "Hispanic coverage." Again, existing studies that look at newspaper coverage of Hispanics were used to develop this list (Greenberg et al., Turk et al.). A news item was labeled as Hispanic content if the text or headline 1) contained Hispanic surnames; 2) referred to a Spanish-speaking country; 3) dealt with issues that involve Hispanics, or that have been identified by Hispanic organizations or leaders as Hispanic issues; 4) referred to Hispanic culture or customs; and/or 5) referred to Hispanics as members of a minority group (see Table 10). Due to multiple coding, the results shown in Table 10 do not sum to 100 percent. In other words, a news item might have met just one of the criteria -- for instance, including a Spanish surname -- or it might have met them all. And often an identifier, such as a Spanish-speaking country or Hispanic surname, that appeared in the text did not appear in the headline.

Table 10: Identifying Hispanic coverage in *TDMN*

The 489 news items in the sample were identified as Hispanic coverage because:	**In text and/or headline**
They contained Spanish surnames	83%
They referred to a Spanish-speaking country or countries	44
They dealt with issues that involve Hispanics, or that have been identified by Hispanic organizations and/or leaders as Hispanic issues	38
They referred to Hispanic culture or customs	12
They referred to Hispanics as members of a minority group	9

News items were most likely to be included in the sample because they contained Spanish surnames. Spanish names appeared in about 80 percent of the sample stories and about one-tenth of the headlines. Around 40 percent of the sample stories and one-fourth of headlines referred to a Spanish-speaking country or dealt with a Hispanic issue. References to Hispanic culture or customs appeared in about one-tenth of the sample stories, as did references to Hispanics as members of a minority group. However, these references were almost completely absent from headlines.

Of the 214 news items (44 percent of the 489 sampled items) that referred to a Spanish-speaking country or countries, 95 percent mentioned Mexico (see Table 11). Colombia and Spain were both mentioned in around 20 percent. And Argentina, Panama, Chile, Guatemala and Uruguay were each mentioned in about 10 percent. Again, due to multiple coding -- many of these stories referred to more than one Spanish-speaking country -- these categories sum to more than 100 percent.

Table 11: Spanish-speaking country mentioned in news items (N=214 references)

Country	% of news items	Country	% of news items
Mexico	55%	El Salvador	3
Colombia	12	Bolivia	2
Spain	11	Paraguay	2
Cuba	7	Venezuela	2
Argentina	6	Dominican Republic	2
Chile	6	Ecuador	1
Guatemala	5	Honduras	1
Uruguay	5	Peru	1
Puerto Rico	4	Others	3

Primary focus of news item

When a Hispanic person, issue or topic, or a Spanish-speaking country did appear in the text of a news item, that person, issue or country was a primary focus of that story about 75 percent of the time. In other words, the stories in our sample did not qualify as "Hispanic" because of a single reference to Mexico buried in the story. Most of the news items in the sample -- 69 percent -- were standard news stories or articles. Columns and news briefs each comprised about one-tenth of the sample. The rest of the news items, almost one-tenth of the sample, were coded as "other." They included reviews, such as music reviews, editorials, letters to the editor, obituaries, and bulletins or announcements, such as wedding announcements.

Main subject or topic of news item

When news items in the sample were categorized by subject or topic, sports showed up at the top of the list (see Table 12). Of the sample items, 27 percent were classified as sports. That was followed by crime and judicial coverage, which comprised about 15 percent of Hispanic coverage. However, the "stereotypical" topics of drugs and gangs made up only a small portion of this 15 percent. Economics, trade or business, and foreign affairs or defense were also fairly common topics. Government/politics, art/culture/entertainment, social/human interest, accidents/disasters, social/moral issues, and education were the topics of a smaller number of stories. Stories about immigration accounted for only about 2 percent of Hispanic coverage.

Table 12: Coverage of Hispanics in news items (N=489)

	Number of news items where main subject or topic was:	**Percent of total news items:**
Sports	132	27%
Judicial/crime*	73	15
Economics/trade/business	59	12
Foreign affairs/defense	54	11
Government/politics	29	6
Art/culture/entertainment	24	5
Human interest	24	5
Accidents/disasters	20	4
Social/moral issues	20	4
Education	15	3
Immigration	10	2
Other**	29	6

*3 percent -- 16 stories -- of "Judicial/crime" coverage was drug-related; 1 percent -- 2 stories -- was gang-related.
**The "Other" category includes the environment, transportation/travel, housing, science/health/medicine, religion and consumer/lifestyle.

Social role of Hispanics in news items

Another goal of the content analysis was to determine how Hispanic individuals were portrayed. Researchers looked at several facets of that portrayal, including the individual's social role. In other words, what types of Hispanic individuals are most likely to appear in news stories, or what segments of society are they from? Coders were able to record information for up to four people in each news item, in order of appearance in the story, for a total of 841 individuals. Given the prominence of sports as a topic of Hispanic coverage, it wasn't surprising that nearly a third of the Hispanic individuals portrayed were athletes (see Table 13). Nearly a fifth were politicians or government officials. Another 15 percent were identified as business people or professionals. In about 6 percent of cases Hispanic individuals were portrayed as entertainers or artists.

Table 13: Portrayal of Hispanics in news items

Social role	**Total individuals (N=841)**
Athlete	29%
Politician/candidate/government official	19
Business/professional	15
Entertainer/artist	6
Criminal	5
Law enforcement/judicial	3
Laborer/unskilled worker	3
Student/young person	3
Homemaker	1
Other	6
Can't determine	10

Although focus groups participants said *Morning News* coverage of Hispanics tends to focus on criminal activity, Hispanic individuals were portrayed as criminals in only about 5 percent of stories. Clearly, further research needs to be done to explain this discrepancy. Internal characteristics of the story or message -- such as the level of negativity and/or conflict -- may have something to do with it. In other words, those stories that are more conflictual may be perceived as more salient. External cues such as story placement may also be responsible. The other role listed above which one could consider a stereotypical portrayal of Hispanics would be that of a laborer or unskilled worker -- the restaurant, hotel or construction worker. In our sample, only 3 percent of Hispanics appeared in this role. A small number of law enforcement personnel and young people/students appeared in sample stories. For about 10 percent of the Hispanics in the sample, insufficient information was provided to determine their social role.

Social role of Hispanics in photos

Photographs in the sample were also examined for their portrayal of Hispanics. Up to two individuals could be coded for each photograph. More than two people were defined as a group. A total of 128 Hispanic individuals were pictured in the sample photos. Again, "social role" was defined as an individual's profession or identifying function in society. In some cases, neither a photograph nor its cutline provided enough information about a person to determine his or her social role. Coders used the "can't determine" category to classify these individuals.

Table 14: Portrayal of Hispanics in photos

Social role	**Total individuals (N=128)**
Athlete	19%
Business/professional	16
Politician/candidate/government officials	13
Student/young person	13
Entertainer/artist	7
Laborer/unskilled worker	4
Law enforcement/judicial	3
Criminal	3
Homemaker	3
Other	4
Can't determine	15

Nearly a fifth of the Hispanics pictured were classified as athletes (see Table 14). Some 16 percent were business people or professionals. Both politicians and young people also appeared fairly frequently, with members of each group showing up in 13 percent of the sample photos. (In contrast, Hispanic youth were featured in only about 3 percent of news items.) Entertainers or artists appeared in a slightly smaller number of photos, 7 percent. And not surprisingly since they did not appear in many stories, Hispanic laborers or criminals were pictured in few sample photographs. But Hispanics were also rarely pictured as law officers or judges or as homemakers.

Role of Hispanics in news items

Researchers also tried to gauge the coverage given to Hispanics by determining what role they played in the stories in which they appeared. Coders were asked to choose the category that best described the role an individual played. As shown in Table 15, close to 60 percent of the Hispanics were coded subject/participant, which meant they played a central role in the story. Another 11 percent were classified as bystanders, which meant they played a more peripheral role. Some 9 percent could best be described as an expert or official, 9 percent as a perpetrator or wrongdoer, and 8 percent as a victim. Only 5 percent of the Hispanic individuals who appeared in the sample stories could be described as heroes or role models.

Table 15: Portrayal of Hispanics in news items

Role in news item	**Total individuals (N=841)**
Subject/participant	58%
Bystander	11
Expert/official spokesperson	9
Perpetrator/wrongdoer	9
Victim	8
Role model/hero/success story	5

Table 16: Portrayal of Hispanics in photos

Role in photo	Total individuals (N=128)
Subject/participant	68%
Role model/hero/success story	12
Expert/official spokesperson	8
Victim	5
Bystander	4
Perpetrator/wrongdoer	3

The role of Hispanics in photographs

As in the stories in the sample, most of the Hispanics in sample photos were coded as subjects or participants (see Table 16). The "bystander" category was understandably small here, since photos generally only feature people who are central to the issue or event illustrated. The number of victims or wrongdoers appearing in sample photos was also very low. In contrast with news stories, 12 percent of the individuals who appeared in photos were portrayed as heroes or role models.

How Hispanic individuals were portrayed in news items

Coders were also asked to determine whether Hispanic individuals were portrayed in news stories in an essentially negative, positive or neutral manner. A portrayal was coded as "favorable" if the story 1) reflected positively on the person, 2) highlighted his or her talents or accomplishments, 3) associated him/her with positive characteristics or actions, or 4) honored his or her culture. A portrayal was "unfavorable" if it 1) reflected negatively on the person; 2) associated him/her with unethical, illegal or immoral behavior; 3) suggested he/she was the source of problems; or 4) associated him or her with a negative experience or failure. A portrayal was neutral or balanced if the news item was neither positive nor negative toward the individual, or if it provided nearly equal amounts of positive and negative information.

Table 17: Portrayal of Hispanics in news items

Hispanic individual was portrayed in a favorable, unfavorable or neutral/balanced light:	**Total individuals (N=841)**
Favorable	53%
Neutral/balanced	30
Unfavorable	17

The findings reported here clearly do not support criticisms of *The Dallas Morning News* expressed in focus group sessions. Many focus group participants said they do not believe there is balanced reporting of events involving Hispanics in *The News*. They also said they feel that gangs, drugs and violent crime are emphasized and that the accomplishments and successes of Hispanics receive little mention. In fact, as Table 17 shows, slightly more than half of the Hispanics in the sampled news items were favorably portrayed, and nearly a third received a balanced portrayal. Fewer than one-fifth of Hispanics were featured in a negative way.

How Hispanic groups were portrayed in news items

Coders used the same criteria listed above to gauge the way Hispanic groups that appeared in the sampled news items were portrayed. A "group" was defined as anything from an informal gathering of friends to a Hispanic-owned business to a formal organization with primarily Hispanic members. Up to two "groups" could be coded for each story, for a total of 108. As can be seen in Table 18, Hispanic groups were just as likely as Hispanic individuals to be treated favorably in *Dallas Morning News* stories.

More than half received favorable treatment, while about a third were presented in a neutral way, and fewer than one-fifth were presented in a negative manner.

Table 18: Portrayal of Hispanic groups in news items

Hispanic group was portrayed in a favorable, unfavorable or neutral/balanced light:	**Total groups (108)**
Favorable	52%
Neutral/balanced	30
Unfavorable	18

How Hispanic individuals AND groups were portrayed in photos

In photo coverage, the incidence of favorable portrayals of Hispanics was even higher than in news stories. For instance, in photos, Hispanic individuals were favorably portrayed 72 percent of the time (see Table 19). A fifth of the portrayals were neutral, and fewer than one-tenth were unfavorable. Treatment of Hispanic groups in photographs was also extremely favorable (see Table 20). Hispanic groups or organizations received positive treatment 68 percent of the time, neutral treatment 22 percent of the time, and unfavorable treatment 14 percent of the time. The same criteria listed above were used for determining whether portrayal of an individual or group was positive, negative or neutral. And both photographs and cutlines were used to make that determination.

Table 19: Portrayal of Hispanic individuals in photos

Hispanic individual was portrayed in a favorable, unfavorable or neutral/balanced light:	**Total individuals (N=128)**
Favorable	72%
Neutral/balanced	20
Unfavorable	8

Table 20: Portrayal of Hispanic groups in photos

Hispanic group was portrayed in a favorable, unfavorable or neutral/balanced light:	**Total groups (14)**
Favorable	64%
Neutral/balanced	22
Unfavorable	14

Table 21: Headline treatment of Hispanic individuals and/or groups

Favorable	54%
Neutral/balanced	25
Unfavorable	21

(Hispanic individuals/groups appeared in 117, or 24 percent, of the headlines in the sample.)

Headline treatment of Hispanic individuals and/or groups

Researchers also examined treatment of both Hispanic individuals and groups in headlines. References to Hispanic groups or individuals appeared in 117, or 24 percent, of the headlines in the sample. And as Table 21 shows, more than half of the references were positive, while one-fourth were neutral and one-fifth were negative.

Discussion & Conclusions

Although the quantity of coverage Hispanics receive in *TDMN* is not high, the quality of that coverage is generally positive. Using the general rule of thumb that the amount of coverage a newspaper gives to a certain group should approximate the percentage of the local population that the group comprises, *Dallas Morning News* coverage of Hispanics is low. Only 5 percent of *Morning News* coverage during July 1995 was found to be "Hispanic," while Hispanics made up about 13 percent of the population in the Dallas-Fort Worth area at that time. However, as noted above, the portrayal of those Hispanics who do appear in news stories or photos is predominantly favorable. One common criticism of general market (mainstream) media treatment of Hispanics is that much of the reporting is unbalanced or negative. In focus groups, for example, Hispanic readers of *The Dallas Morning News* said that gangs, drugs and violent crime are emphasized and that the accomplishments and successes of Hispanics receive little attention. These content analysis findings suggest that this is not the case. In fact, just over half of the Hispanic individuals and groups in the sample were favorably treated in news stories and headlines. In photos, that percentage was even higher: 72 percent of Hispanic individuals and 68 percent of Hispanic groups that appeared in sample photos were favorably portrayed. And when Hispanics were not favorably treated in photos or stories, they generally were portrayed in a neutral or balanced way. Only about one-fifth of sample news stories and one-tenth of sample photos portrayed Hispanics unfavorably.

Keeping in mind the fact that most editors would agree that crime is news, no matter who it involves, this study also suggests that crime is not overemphasized in Hispanic coverage in this newspaper. News items that dealt primarily with the judicial system or crime comprised about 15 percent of the sample. But this does not mean Hispanics were portrayed as criminals in all of these stories. In fact, Hispanic individuals were portrayed as criminals in only 5 percent of sample stories and 3 percent of sample photos. In some cases, a crime story may have been identified as Hispanic coverage if a Hispanic was the victim of a crime, or if a Hispanic police officer or other official appeared as a news source. In addition, only very small portions of crime-related coverage dealt with illegal drugs or gang activity. Only 3 percent of stories were drug-related; only 1 percent were gang-related.

Focus group participants also criticized *The Morning News* for failing to cover the accomplishments of Hispanic athletes who compete in the United States. As this study shows, this clearly is not the case, at least not during baseball season. However, this highlights a flaw found in *Dallas Morning News* coverage that has appeared in other studies: Sports was the primary topic of 27 percent of the sample news items, and more sample stories ran in Sports Day than in any section other than Section A. As for photo coverage, more photos of Hispanics appeared in Sports Day than in any other section. Of course, most of the individual Hispanics featured in sports-related coverage were athletes.

As the discussion above indicates, although the Hispanic coverage in *The Dallas Morning News* is generally positive, it is not as broad-based as it could be. In other words, certain topics and types of people are disproportionately represented. For instance, 65 percent of the coverage was concentrated in four topic areas -- sports, judicial/crime, economics/trade/business, and foreign affairs/defense. Similarly, 63 percent of the Hispanic individuals featured in news stories were either athletes; politicians, candidates or government officials; or business people. Photos portrayed a slightly broader range of social roles. Athletes were still represented most frequently in photos. But a student or young person was just as likely to appear in a photo as a politician or government official.

This limited vision of Latinos is problematic for several reasons. First, it <u>may</u> limit what young Latinos envision for their future by restricting the roles in which they see themselves. Where are the physicians, the architects, the teachers? Second, it may help perpetuate myopic stereotypes of Latinos among other ethnic groups simply by offering few alternative visions of Latino life. Both effects are pernicious and further steps must be taken to ensure that the general market media offer a broader picture of Hispanics and the Hispanic community. The two best ways to begin this process have been identified many times in the past. First, the general market media must make a commitment to recruit more Hispanics and other minorities as reporters, editors and station managers. This will not ensure an integrated news product, but it is a necessary first step. Secondly, mass media courses in high schools and universities must educate media consumers to recognize the importance of an integrated news product. Savvy media consumers, one can only hope, may then demand news and entertainment programming that more accurately reflects the social realities of the 21st century.

These steps should improve the ability of general market media to serve as community builders in an increasingly heterogeneous American society. At the same time, the mass media must do a better job of meeting the specialized needs of the Hispanic community. The limited research presented here points to the need for further study of how best to serve Latino readers and viewers in the United States. As the non-English speaking populations of states such as Texas and California grow, the need for media that can communicate quickly with members of this group, especially in times of emergency, will only increase. In terms of meeting everyday informational needs, most Hispanic readers would like to see Spanish-language content in *TDMN*, but a lack of Spanish content does not appear to prevent them from reading. (*The Morning News* currently publishes a weekly Spanish-language supplement, *La Fuente*, that focuses on local news. However, since it is distributed only as a zoned section to high-density Hispanic neighborhoods, not all Hispanic *Morning News* readers have access to it. For instance, several focus group participants were not familiar with it.) When Hispanic readers were asked what, if any, portion of *TDMN* should be in Spanish, more than half felt there should be some content in Spanish. In focus groups, participants who wanted some content in Spanish specified that it should be content of importance to Hispanics.

However, research by Subervi-Velez and Nicolini suggests that general market newspapers needn't feel as if they are in direct competition with local Spanish-language dailies and weeklies. Hispanics, perhaps especially those with an interest in "assimilating," tend to feel the need to consult "mainstream" newspapers to keep up with events outside their neighborhood. In fact, use of the two news sources may in fact be complementary, and it may be in the interest of daily metros to explore relationships with Spanish-language weeklies in their readership area. (Several Spanish-language weeklies are based in Dallas, the two largest of which, *Extra* and *El Sol de Texas*, both have weekly circulations of 28,000.)

Hispanic readers of The *Dallas Morning News* do express a high level of interest in "Hispanic" content. More than three-fourths said they would typically make time to read a story that dealt with Hispanics or with Hispanic culture or customs. Nearly 80 percent would read a story that focused on Hispanic organizations or individuals. And nearly 70 percent would read a story if it contained Spanish surnames or referred to Spanish-speaking countries. The content analysis found that Mexico receives much more *Morning News* coverage than any other Latin country. This focus makes sense given that the majority of Hispanic readers in the Dallas area are of Mexican descent. At the same time, Hispanic readers expressed a strong interest in such clearly local issues as education and crime reporting. This highlights the role that the media must play for any group: fostering group cohesiveness as well as improving members' ability to function in the larger world. In the case of Mexican-Americans in Texas, this may mean on the one hand providing a window on Mexico while on the other providing the daily information they will need to ensure that their children remain safe and get a good education. This is clearly an obligation that if *The Dallas Morning News* and other Texas newspapers are wise, they will not fail to meet.

Getting It Right: Newsmaker Perceptions of Accuracy and Credibility

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Abstract

In a survey of news sources cited in a metropolitan daily newspaper, 59 percent of local news stories examined were reported in error. The error rate was on the high side of the historical range. Factual errors were most common but "errors of judgment" were considered most egregious. News sources were generally forgiving of error, rating most inaccuracies minor and almost never seeking corrections. Inaccuracies were found to affect source perceptions of story credibility, but errors from any one story had no significant influence on overall newspaper credibility. The study, the first independent and comprehensive newspaper accuracy review in more than a decade, provides empirical support that inaccuracies remain common despite technological and professional advances in the newsroom. However, the findings challenge the proposition that errors are at the heart of the news media's credibility problems; "getting it right," at least from the perspective of news sources in this study, appears to be more a matter of context and sensitivity than factual accuracy.

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Getting It Right: Newsmaker Perceptions of Accuracy and Credibility

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Accuracy is the foundation of media credibility. If journalists can't get their facts straight, how can readers trust the media to reliably convey and interpret the news? A recent survey commissioned by the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) found that even small errors feed public skepticism about a newspaper's credibility.[1] Other studies have shown that errors are quite common (about one in two stories are found to be in error).[2] As the Fourth Estate's credibility sinks perilously low, it's no wonder that ASNE president Edward Seaton declared that it's time to make "a fetish of accuracy."[3]

Long before Joseph Pulitzer evoked his three rules of the profession – "Accuracy! Accuracy! Accuracy!" – reporters and editors fretted over reporting a story correctly. Concern over newspaper credibility also is older than the First Amendment. But the quest for accuracy and credibility took on a new sense of urgency after an embarrassing rash of stories in the past year were retracted because they lacked substantiation or had been fabricated out of whole cloth. In a lead article published in the *American Journalism Review*, Judith Sheppard wrote, "The public perception of the [media's] shortcomings has

[1] American Society of Newspaper Editors, *Why Newspaper Credibility Has Been Dropping*, (Washington, D.C.: American Society of Newspaper Editors, December 1998), 1. The study was carried out by Urban & Associates.
[2] Michael Singletary, "Accuracy in News Reporting: A Review of the Research," *ANPA News Research Report No. 25*, January 25, 1980, 6.
[3] Quoted in Judith Sheppard, "Playing Defense: Is enough being done to prevent future journalistic embarrassments?" *American Journalism Review*, September 1998, 49.

never been darker, while the pressures – electronic competition, the need to be first with a startling story, the need to 'tweak' a good story into greatness with a few tricks from the novelist's bag – are at their greatest. At the same time…those traditional sentinels of accuracy, [newspaper] editors and copy editors, are expected to focus more than ever on presentation of stories, less on their content."[4]

While accuracy and credibility have become buzzwords in the news industry, the research literature is surprisingly devoid of recent study of errors in newspapers. A literature search indicates that it has been more than a decade since the last published research assessing the rate and types of error made by newspapers.[5] Nearly 30 years ago, an accuracy investigator called attention to the dearth of research examining the severity of errors made in newspapers.[6] Clearly it makes a difference whether an error is perceived as large or small, but this gap in the literature persists. The link between accuracy and credibility is intuitively appealing: If journalists can't get their facts straight, how can readers trust what they read in the newspaper? While the historically high rate of error in the press and its persistent credibility problems are well documented, little research empirically examines the relationship between accuracy and public confidence in newspapers.

This study seeks to address those deficiencies. In a case study of *The* (Raleigh, N.C.) *News & Observer*, a five-page questionnaire on news accuracy and credibility was

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[4] *Ibid.*

[5] The most recent overall newspaper accuracy survey identified in the literature was conduced in 1987. See Philip Meyer, "A Workable Measure of Auditing Accuracy in Newspapers," *Newspaper Research Journal* 10(1):39-51 (Fall 1988). Since then, researchers have focused on more specialized kinds of accuracy research, such as error in news magazines, science reporting and reporter bias.

[6] William B. Blankenburg, "News Accuracy: Some Findings on the Meaning of Errors," *Journal of Communication* 20(4):375-86 (December 1970).

distributed to more than 1,000 newsmakers[7] cited in local news stories. The survey was based on a standard set of questions posed by accuracy researchers over the past 60 years and the ASNE "model" credibility questionnaire established in 1984. By combining these two well-established surveys, the study provides a needed benchmark on newspaper accuracy and credibility at the end of the millenium. Research questions posed by this study include: What kinds of errors were most frequently made? What kinds of errors were most troubling to newsmakers? How credible do newsmakers find the press in which they are quoted? And, perhaps most importantly, the study examines the relationship between accuracy and credibility. How do errors affect the newsmaker perceptions of the newspaper? What is the influence of journalistic accuracy and media credibility on working relations with newsmakers?

Background and literature review

Accuracy research

More than 60 years ago, Mitchell Charnley of the University of Minnesota opened a new line of inquiry in mass communication research when he reported the first accuracy survey of newsmakers. In a mail survey sent to people cited in 1,000 news stories from three Minneapolis daily newspapers, recipients were asked to identify typographical, factual and interpretive errors. Errors in "meaning," as Charnley labeled the interpretive errors, were those in which the newsmaker believes the story fails to give a fair representation of the subject. Charnley found that about half of the stories were completely free of reported error. The most common errors identified by news sources

[7] To avoid confusion over terminology, this paper refers to persons cited in the news as "newsmakers" instead of "news sources," the term commonly used in accuracy literature to refer to the medium (i.e., newspapers, television) in which the news is communicated.

were those in meaning, names, and title. The results of Charnley's study, published as "Preliminary Notes" in a 1936 edition of *Journalism Quarterly*, served as a prototype for a series of accuracy surveys that followed.[8]

Following Charnley's example, researchers have commonly classified factual errors into the following categories: misquotes, spellings, names, ages, other numbers, titles, addresses, other locations, time and dates.[9] Some researchers have created a factual/subjective dichotomy by expanding the list of "errors of meaning" to include categories such as overemphasis, underemphasis, omission, and misleading headlines.[10] Research using factor analysis found support for this two-category conception.[11] Investigators also have surveyed news sources to gauge the accuracy of science reporting,[12] coverage of social issues,[13] and news magazines.[14] Since the 1970s, accuracy audits also have been a common management tool used by newspapers.

The proportion of stories with error has ranged from 40 percent to 60 percent,[15]

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[8] Mitchell V. Charnley, "Preliminary Notes on a Study of Newspaper Accuracy," *Journalism Quarterly*, 13:394-401 (1936).

[9] See, for example, Charles H. Brown, "Majority of Readers Give Papers An A for Accuracy," *Editor & Publisher*, February 13, 1965, 13, 63; Fred C. Berry, "A Study of Accuracy in Local News Stories of Three Dailies," *Journalism Quarterly*, 44:482-90 (Autumn 1967); William B. Blankenburg, "News Accuracy: Some Findings on the Meaning of Errors," *Journal of Communication* 20(4):375-86 (December 1970), and William A. Tillinghast, " Source Control and Evaluation of Newspaper Inaccuracies," *Newspaper Research Journal* (Fall 1983): 13.

[10] Berry, "A Study of Accuracy," 487; See also Gary Lawrence and David Grey, "Subjective Inaccuracies in Local News Reporting," *Journalism Quarterly* 46(4):753-57 (Winter 1969), and Hal Marshall, "Newspaper Accuracy in Tucson," *Journalism Quarterly* 54(1):165-168 (Spring 1977).

[11] Michael Ryan, "A Factor Analytic Study of Scientists' Responses to Error," *Journalism Quarterly*, 52(2):333-36 (Summer 1975).

[12] Philip Tichenor, Clarice Olien, Annette Harrison and George Donohue, "Mass Communication Systems and Communication Accuracy in Science News Reporting, *Journalism Quarterly* 47(4):673-683 (Winter 1970); James W. Tankard Jr. and Michael Ryan, "News Source Perceptions of Accuracy of Science Coverage," *Journalism Quarterly* 51(2):219-25;334 (Summer 1974)

[13] Michael Ryan and Dorothea Owen, "An Accuracy Survey of Metropolitan Newspaper coverage of Social Issues," *Journalism Quarterly* 54(1):27-32 (Spring 1977).

[14] L. L. Burriss, "Accuracy of News Magazines as Perceived by News Sources," *Journalism Quarterly* 62(4):824-827 (Winter 1985).

[15] Ryan and Owen, "An Accuracy Survey," 27. Also refer to M.W. Singletary, R. Boland, W. Izzard, & T. Rosser, "How accurate are news magazine forecasts?" *Journalism Quarterly* 60(2), 342-344. In his 1988 study, Meyer reported a 25 percent inaccuracy rate, but his investigation was based on a different and much smaller selection of error categories than other accuracy surveys. See Meyer, "A Working Measure," 44.

but most surveys have hewed remarkably close to the 50 percent mark identified by Charnley in 1936. Noted Michael Singletary in a review of accuracy research, "Numerous researchers since then have confirmed that about half of all straight news stories contain some type of error."[16] But newspapers apparently receive a much more positive review from their own accuracy surveys. In a review of 24 dailies that conducted accuracy checks, 15 reported that 90 percent or more of their stories were error free.[17] Investigators speculate that fear of offending the newspaper and differences in research rigor may account for the disparity in accuracy rates.[18] Researchers also have found that there is often disagreement between sources and reporters over what is error. For example, in an accuracy study of the San Jose *Mercury-News*, reporters agreed with less than 25 percent of source claims of error.[19] Source-reporter agreement was only 5 percent for subjective errors such as issues of omission and emphasis.

Indeed, there is considerable latitude in interpretation of what constitutes error.[20] Communication accuracy has been defined as "the extent to which a message produces agreement between source and receiver,"[21] as "truthful reproduction of an event or activity of public interest,"[22] and by its converse, "the deviation of a reported observation of an event from the 'reality' or the 'truth' of the event."[23] Despite these different perspectives, a fundamental consensus underpins accuracy research: Newsmakers by

[16] Singletary, "Accuracy in News Reporting," 6.
[17] Gilbert Cranberg, "Do accuracy checks really measure what respondents think about news stories?" *The Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors* 697:14-15 (July/August 1987). However, an experiment designed to replicate Cranberg findings failed to show statistically different results between a newspaper and university sponsored surveys. See Meyer, "A Workable Measure," 39-51.
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] William Tillinghast, "Newspaper Errors: Reporters Dispute Most Source Claims," *Newspaper Research Journal, 3(4):15-23* (July 1982).
[20] A thoughtful review of accuracy research was made by Frank Fee, "Errors in the News," (unpublished manuscript, July, 1993).
[21] Tichenor, Olien, Harrison & Donohue, "Mass Communication," 673.
[22] Blankenburg, "News Accuracy," 376.
[23] Lawrence & Grey, "Subjective Inaccuracies," 753.

definition have first-hand knowledge of the news story and therefore are well positioned to be an informed arbiter of error. Accuracy from the newsmakers' perspective is also important because they tend to be opinion leaders, the segment of the population that plays a strong role in shaping public opinion.[24] Moreover, newsmakers are essential to the news-gathering process; loss of trust can only impede the ability of journalists to do their work.

Credibility Research

As with accuracy, issues of media credibility have long intrigued academic and industry researchers. In fact, Charnley's investigation of news accuracy is considered one of two "primary ancestors" of credibility research.[25] (The other prong, the relationship between media believability and persuasion, is largely outside the scope of this paper). Noted research analyst Cecilie Gaziano, "Credibility is an important issue to study because public inability to believe the news media severely hampers the nation's ability to inform the public, to monitor leaders and to govern. Decreased public trust also can lead to diminished freedom of the press and can threaten the economic health of some media."[26]

Numerous studies have shown that credibility is a multi-dimensional concept.[27] While investigators have varied widely in their definition of credibility, perception of

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[24] For a discussion of the role of opinion leaders, see Shearon Lowery and Melvin DeFleur, "Personal Influence: the Two-Step Flow of Communication," in *Milestones in Mass Communication Research* (White Plains, N.Y.: Longman, 1995),189-211.
[25] Cecilie Gaziano and Kristin McGrath, "Measuring the Concept of Credibility," *Journalism Quarterly* 63(3):451-462 (Autumn 1986).
[26] Cecilie Gaziano, "How Credible is the Credibility Crisis?" *Journalism Quarterly* 65(2):267-268;375 (Summer 1988).
[27] See, for example, Michael Singletary, "Components of Credibility of a Favorable News Source," *Journalism Quarterly* 53(2):316-319 (Summer 1976); Gaziono and McGrath, "Measuring the Concept," 452; and Tony Rimmer and Advid Weaver, "Different Questions, Different Answers? Media Use and Media Credibility," *Journalism Quarterly* 64(2):28-36;44 (Spring 1987).

accuracy is a common component of much of their research.[28] One of the leading credibility studies was conducted in 1984, when the American Society of Newspaper Editors commissioned a survey of 1,600 adults regarding a wide range of perceptions of media credibility. The results, providing a more comprehensive look at credibility than any previous research,[29] were widely disseminated among news managers as well as in the academic press. ASNE proposed the survey serve as a "model" for newspapers to follow with their own research.[30] Gaziano and McGrath analyzed the ASNE survey data and developed with the aid of factor analysis a 12-item additive index found to be a coherent measure of credibility.[31] Accuracy was one of the items that loaded most strongly (that is, had the most predictive value). Meyer conducted a validation study of the Gaziano-McGrath scales and proposed a more narrowly defined believability index based on reader perceptions of whether the news is accurate, fair, unbiased, can be trusted, and tells the whole story.[32] In a cross-validation study of these widely used credibility scales, West found the Meyer five-item believability index was reliable and empirically valid while the Gaziano-McGrath credibility index was reliable but appeared to measure more than one underlying factor.[33] West concluded that the Meyer modification of the Gaziano-McGrath credibility index could set the standard for future credibility research.[34]

[28] For example, in a review of four major credibility surveys conducted in the 1980s, Gaziano found that each survey included questions regarding perceptions of accuracy. "How Credible," 270. See also Wayne Wanta and Yu-Wei-Hu, " The Effects of Credibility, Reliance, and Exposure on Media Agenda-Setting: A Path Analysis Mode," *Journalism Quarterly* 71(2):91 (Spring 1994).
[29] Gaziano and McGrath, "Measuring the Concept," 452.
[30] American Society of Newspaper Editors, *Newspaper Credibility: Building Reader Trust, (Washington, D.C.*: American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1985), 63. The study was carried out by MORI Research.
[31] *Ibid.*
[32] Philip Meyer, "Defining and Measuring Credibility of Newspapers: Developing an Index," *Journalism Quarterly* 65(3):567-574 (Autumn 1988).
[33] Mark Douglas West, "Validating a Scale for the Measurement of Credibility: A Covariance Structure Modeling Approach," *Journalism Quarterly* 71(1):159-168 (Spring 1994).
[34] *Ibid.*, 165.

The 1984 study ASNE credibility study was spawned by industry concern regarding public distrust of the press. Polls had shown that the public's confidence in newspapers to get "the facts straight" had diminished substantially[35] and that overall press credibility was in alarming decline.[36] The ASNE survey provided more reason for concern. The study concluded three-fourths of all adults have some problems with the credibility of the press and slightly less than half described their daily newspaper as accurate.[37] Fourteen years later, ASNE commissioned another series of surveys and focus groups to understand why public confidence in the media has declined even further. "Major Finding #1" was that the public sees too many factual errors and spelling or grammar mistakes in newspapers.[38] "Even seemingly small errors feed the public skepticism about a newspaper's credibility," the report said. However, the new ASNE study found that admitting errors and running corrections help, not hurt, newspaper credibility. Of those who found errors, about one in five said these mistakes are getting more frequent.[39] Perhaps even more sobering, the survey found that those who have had actual experience with the news process are the most critical of media credibility. The researchers concluded, "The closer someone gets to the process, the more likely they are to feel the press chases and overdramatizes sensational stories, and the more likely they are to be skeptics about the accuracy of news reports (in particular) and journalists (in general)."[40]

Journalists also believe their profession increasingly suffers from inaccuracy and lack of credibility. In a recent survey of 552 journalists and media executives, the Pew

[35] Michael Burgoon, Judee Burgoon and Miriam Wilkinson, "Newspaper Image and Evaluation," *Journalism Quarterly* 58:411 (1981).
[36] Neal Shine, "Editors chastised and cheered at 'mass paranoia' session," *APME News*, January 1984, 3-8.
[37] American Society of Newspaper Editors, *Newspaper Credibility*, 13, 20.
[38] American Society of Newspaper Editors, *Why Newspaper Credibility*, 1.
[39] *Ibid.*, 3.
[40] *Ibid.*, 20-21.

Research Center found that 55 percent of those working for local news organizations said that news reports were marred by factual errors and sloppy reporting, up from 40 percent four years earlier. About two-thirds said the distinction between reporting and commentary has faded.[41]

Despite the impressive lineage of media accuracy and credibility research, the literature offers remarkably little guidance to the relationship between error and believability in newspapers. Furthermore, little is known about what kinds of errors are most damaging to newspaper credibility. Most accuracy research has focused on whether or not an error occurred without any attempt to distinguish between small and large errors. In 1970, William Blankenburg urged accuracy investigators to ask newsmakers to rate the seriousness of each distinct error, a call that went largely unheeded.[42]

Factual errors generally are found to be more common than subjective errors but little is know about which kind is more important to newsmakers. Is it true, as newspaper readers told ASNE pollsters, that even small mistakes exact a high toll on credibility? To what extent do wronged newsmakers actually turn to corrections to vent their frustration over errors found in the press? The public's rising contempt for the media has been shown in many polls, but largely unexplored is the extent that the phenomenon extends to newsmakers – the people who deal most regularly with the press and whom the press rely on to for the news.

Research questions include:

(1) What kinds of errors occur most frequently? What kinds of errors are considered most important?

(2) What is the relationship between error rate and newspaper credibility? Do factual errors affect newspaper credibility more than subjective errors?

[41] "Striking the Balance: Views of the press on their performance and the people." (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, 1999).
[42] Blankenburg, "Some Findings," 383.

(3) Are seasoned newsmakers more accepting of error than occasional news sources? Do error rates vary by newsmaker categories (i.e., government, business, citizen, etc.)?

(4) What is the influence of newspaper accuracy and credibility on the working relationship of newsmakers and the press?

Survey Methodology

A five-page self-administered questionnaire was developed to assess newsmaker perceptions of newspaper accuracy and credibility. The accuracy questions closely followed the factual error classifications established by Charnley and the lineage of research that followed and the subjective error classifications developed by Berry and his successors. Newsmakers also were asked to describe each inaccuracy and to rate the severity of error types on a 7-point Likert-like scale. The credibility questions were almost identical to those posed in the 1984 ASNE "model" credibility questionnaire.[43] In addition, the survey probed newsmakers' willingness to serve as a news source and their views of the credibility of competing news media. To pre-test the survey, the questionnaire was administered to a small sample of newsmakers cited in a campus newspaper, and slight revisions were made to address questions that had been identified as ambiguous.

The survey was sent with a cover letter on university letterhead explaining the purpose of the research and a stamped return envelope addressed to a university journalism professor.[44] Each survey was accompanied by a copy of the story in which the

[43] As suggested by Meyer, three negative-positive items were reversed to make the semantic polarities consistent. See "Defining and Measuring Credibility," 570.

[44] Past studies indicate that the return rate and perhaps validity are improved by having accuracy surveys administered by independent academic researchers rather than by editors. See Cranberg, "Do accuracy checks really measure," 14-15; Meyer, "Defining and Measuring Credibility," 42-45.

newsmaker was cited. Newsmakers were promised that they would not be identified by name or organization in published results. However, complete confidentiality was not assured. Newsmakers were told that their responses might be shared with the newspaper's editors and reporters in order to trace how errors were made. The survey was conducted in cooperation with *The News & Observer*, which paid for printing and mailing. The newspaper also hired a research assistant who made copies of each story in the study, tracked down newsmaker addresses, and assembled the survey packages.

Survey packages were mailed to primary newsmakers cited in locally produced, bylined news stories appearing in the front, metro and business sections of *The News & Observer* over a 31-day period in early 1999.[45] Following Blankenburg's operational definition of a "significantly mentioned" newsmaker, surveys were sent to the first two people who, either as witnesses or participants, have first-hand knowledge of the event.[46] When an address couldn't be found for one of the first two primary newsmakers, a survey was sent to the next "significantly mentioned" newsmaker in the story. Surveys were mailed the same week, usually the same day, as the story appeared. Following a two-week waiting period, each non-responding newsmakers was sent a follow-up survey with a cover letter urging their participation.

From 553 local news stories published in the period studied here, 1,013 newsmakers were identified (some stories had only a single source). In all but eight stories, deliverable addresses were identified for at least one newsmaker cited in the article. A total of 946 survey packages were mailed. Newsmakers returned 504 surveys for a response rate of slightly more than 53 percent. The per story response rate, in which

[45] The survey dates were Jan. 18 through Feb. 17, 1999.

[46] By this definition, Blankenburg explains, a person making an appointment of a civic committee would be considered "significantly mentioned" and so would the chairman of the committee if he were quoted or

at least one primary newsmaker returned a survey, was 71 percent. Table 1 shows that a little more than half of the respondents identified themselves as government or business officials, while less than 10 percent said their role as newsmaker was either as a citizen activist or witness/bystander. About half of the newsmakers said they had been interviewed by the paper three or fewer times in the past 12 months, but nearly a quarter of the respondents were veteran newsmakers interviewed more than 10 times. These results reflect the media's dependency on official, tried-and-true sources of news.

Table 1 here

The study has several limitations. As a case study, the results cannot be generalized to other newspapers. The study examines "errors" only from the newsmaker's perspective; the perception of error is likely quite different from a reporter's or reader's viewpoint. Even though this study relies on classic survey techniques of accuracy and credibility, measuring these constructs remains an inexact science. This study provides a snapshot view of the influence of newspaper error, but newsmaker judgments of credibility draw on cumulative experience with the press.

Results

Accuracy

Out of the 504 returned surveys, newsmakers identified 573 errors, or 1.1 errors per respondent. Fifty-two percent of the respondents found at least one inaccuracy. The number of errors reported per story was 1.5. Newsmakers found one or more errors in 59

present at the time of the appointment. The new members, if merely listed, would not be deemed significantly mentioned. Blankenburg, "News Accuracy," 376.

percent of the 390 locally produced stories they reviewed. Inaccuracy rates per story were slightly higher than per respondent because the majority of stories were reviewed by two newsmakers, thereby increasing the opportunity to catch errors.[47] The inaccuracy rates are on the high side of error rates found in prior accuracy surveys, but precise comparisons cannot be made because of differences in number of error categories and other methodological inconsistencies through the years. Findings from this study and past accuracy surveys are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 here

Factual errors were cited more frequently than subjective errors, accounting for 57 percent of the inaccuracies reported. Factual errors tended to be substantive: misquotations, incorrect numbers, and inaccurate or misleading headlines were among the most commonly cited mistakes. Word-processors and automated spell-checkers apparently did little to eradicate the bane of typos and misspellings. Despite these technological advances, typographical and spelling errors accounted for 10.3 percent of factual errors, an error rate only slightly below the rate reported by Charnley more than 60 years ago!

The most frequently cited subjective error involved not what was reported in the newspaper but what was left out: 25 percent of subjective errors comprise what newsmakers considered "essential information missing." Newsmakers considered subjective errors more egregious than factual errors. On a Likert-like scale in which 1 is a

[47] To minimize double-counting, mean scores were used whenever sources identified identical error categories for the same story.

minor error and 7 a major error, the mean factual error rating was 3.4 compared to a 4.0 mean subjective rating. Nearly 28 percent of the subjective errors were assigned one of the two most severe ratings, while less than 19 percent of factual errors were rated as severely. The most severely rated inaccuracies involved context and perspective, such as hype, misrepresentation, and essential information left out. Least severely rated were factual errors relating to location, age and typos – details that do not fundamentally affect the overall context of the news story. A complete ranking of errors is displayed in Table 3.

Table 3 here

Despite the prevalence of perceived inaccuracies, only *three* of the 504 respondents reported requesting a correction (one other said he set the record straight in a letter to the editor). The most common reason given for not seeking a correction was that the errors were considered minor. Other reasons included fear of creating ill will with the newspaper, the request would be ignored or shunned, and the perceived futility of fighting a reporter's preconceived "spin" or agenda. As one newsmaker explained why she didn't seek a correction, "Scared to – reporter has apparent 'thing' about this topic. It might come back to bite us." Wrote another, "We all know the 'Media' look for an angle – sometimes the story fits the facts, sometimes they don't."

Inaccuracies also appeared to deter few from being willing to serve as "newsmakers." Based on the experience with the story under scrutiny, 64 percent of the respondents characterized themselves as eager to be a news source again compared to less than 4 percent who said they were reluctant. On a seven-point scale (with 1 = eager and 7 = reluctant), the mean response was 2.3. In other words, the adage, "Once burned, twice shy," doesn't hold among the newsmakers studied here.

Newsmakers, though well positioned to spot mistakes, present a point of view that is inherently invested in the stories they're being asked to assess. How do their views of newspaper accuracy compare to the public at large? One benchmark is the Carolina Poll, in which a representative sample of adult residents of North Carolina were asked how often they found factual errors within the news stories of a daily newspaper.[48] Fifty-four percent claimed they spotted errors at least a few times a month – a percentage almost identical to that of newsmakers who, indeed, did identify errors in the stories they reviewed. These figures should be interpreted with caution. This accuracy study was conducted by mail and focused on Raleigh-area newsmakers, while the poll was statewide and conducted over the telephone; this study asked newsmakers only about stories appearing in *The News & Observer*, while the poll asked adults about the accuracy of stories in any newspaper.[49] Nonetheless, this accuracy survey provides supporting evidence of the public perception that mistakes in the newspaper are common.

Credibility

Newsmakers considered *The News & Observer* a relatively credible news medium. On a seven-point scale (1 is most credible), the Raleigh-based newspaper received a mean rating of 2.56. The rating was significantly higher than the ratings given

[48] The Carolina Poll was conducted March 1999 by the School of Journalism and Mass Communication and the Institute for Research in Social Science, University of North Carolina. The sample size was 615. The sampling error was 3.95 percentage points.

[49] Of the respondents within the Metropolitan Statistical Area served by *The News & Observer*, 47 percent reported finding errors at least several times a month. However, the small sample size (n = 79) yields a large margin of error and the results are not statistically different from statewide figures. In a 1998 national telephone survey conducted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 48 percent of respondents reported finding errors at least several times a month.

other newspapers, television, radio, news magazines, and the Internet (refer to Table 4). These findings may seem at odds with a long line of research showing the public consistently holds television as a more credible news source than newspapers.[50] However, the results here are consistent with, and indeed provide further evidence supporting, other research that shows media credibility is linked to how much the media are used as well as a variety of socioeconomic indicators.[51] Since newsmakers by definition are those "in the know, " presumably many regularly read the region's major local newspaper. And with more than half of the respondents either in government or business, a newsmaker generally fits what researchers have pegged the "ideal" newspaper reader: someone who "has had at least some college, resides in an urban area, and has a high-status occupation, most likely one of the professions."[52]

Table 4 here

Newsmakers also rated *The News & Observer* higher on the ASNE model credibility questionnaire than when the same questions were posed in the national sample of newspaper readers in 1984. On a 5-point Likert-like scale (with 1 the highest positive score and 5 most negative), *The News & Observer* received a mean 2.49 rating compared

[50] John Newhagen and Clifford Nass, "Differential Criteria for Evaluating Credibility of Newspapers and TV News," *Journalism Quarterly* 66(2): 277-284 (Summer 1989). Also see Mark Douglas West, "Validating a Scale," 159;
[51] See, for example, Bruce Westley and Werner Severin, " Some Correlates of Media Credibility," *Journalism Quarterly* 41:325-35 (1964); Bradley Greenberg, "Media Use and Believability: Some Multiple Correlates," *Journalism Quarterly* 43:665-70,732 (1966), and Rimmer and Weaver, " "Different Questions," 28.
[52] *Ibid.*

to the 3.0 mean of the 1984 study.[53] *News & Observer* newsmakers rated the newspaper most positively on reporter training, concern for the community, fairness and accuracy. Newsmakers were most negative in their assessment of the newspaper regarding sensationalism, bias, watching out for the reader's interests, and separating fact from opinion – issues that suggest *The News & Observer* is perceived as having an "agenda" beyond reporting the news.

Linkages

As noted earlier, it would be reasonable to expect that newspaper credibility is positively correlated with newspaper accuracy: A news medium is unlikely to be held credible unless it is believed accurate. To examine this supposition empirically, several composite variables were created. A story credibility index was created based on seven criteria that newsmakers rated individually the news article in which they were cited. The seven criteria were fairness and balance, context and perspective, clarity of writing, story placement, newsworthiness, story tone, and story motivation. In an internal test of reliability, the seven items produced a .89 Chronbach alpha coefficient, indicating the items measure the same characteristic. The Meyer five-item believability index (bias, trustworthiness, accuracy, fairness and "tells the whole story") was used to examine overall newspaper credibility; reliability was adequate ($\alpha = .92$). Source willingness to be interviewed again was based on a respondent's rating on a 7-point scale from reluctant to eager. In addition, factor analysis yielded a broader measure of newspaper credibility. Using these measures, the effect of inaccuracy on story credibility is examined, then the

[53] Both means are based on 13 items. In this comparison, three of the original 16 items were dropped because of reversed polarity measures in the original ASNE study. See note 43.

effect of inaccuracy on overall newspaper credibility is examined, and finally, the effects of inaccuracy and story credibility on overall newspaper credibility are considered as a multivariate model.

To evaluate the relationship between error and credibility, correlation coefficients were computed among four measures of newspaper inaccuracy (number of factual errors, severity of factual errors, number of subjective errors, and severity of subjective errors). Using the Bonferroni approach to control for Type I error across the eight correlations, a *p*-value of less than .00625 (.05 / 8) was required for significance. As shown in Table 5, the relationship between accuracy and story credibility was statistically significant by every measure of error. The correlation between total errors (the number of factual and subjective errors combined) and story credibility was moderately strong, $r = .368$, $p < .001$. Errors of judgment caused more newsmaker distress than factual reporting errors. The extent to which newsmakers believed the story erred in interpretation explained approximately 27 percent of the variance in their overall assessment of the story's credibility.

While the link between errors and story credibility appeared fairly strong, the effect of errors on overall *newspaper* credibility was less pronounced. As shown in Table 5, a statistically significant relationship was found between the number of factual errors and subjective errors detected and newsmaker perception of the newspaper's credibility (as measured by the Meyer believability index). However, with only 3.1 of the variance explained, the relationship was weak. A moderately strong correlation was found between believability and the severity of subjective errors, but the correlation with severity of factual errors was not statistically significant.

Another way to examine the impact of inaccuracies is to determine the relationship between perceived errors and the willingness of newsmakers to be news sources again. Table 5 shows that by several measures of error, the correlation between accuracy and newsmaker willingness to be a source was significant. The strongest relationship was with perceived severity of subjective error. The correlation between source willingness and *News & Observer* credibility, as measured by the Meyer believability index, also was statistically significant, $r = .267, p < .001$. An even stronger relationship was found between source willingness and the newsmakers' perception of the story's overall credibility, $r = .451, p < .001$. Clearly, newsmakers were more eager to cooperate with a news medium when they considered it credible.

Table 5 here

Would a broader, more powerful statistical instrument reveal larger influence of story inaccuracy on overall newspaper credibility? To test this idea, all 16 items of the ASNE credibility questionnaire were analyzed using factor analysis, a multivariate statistical technique helpful in identifying constructs from large sets of interrelated data. With factor analysis, each variable is weighted according to its contribution to the underlying dimension, yielding a single and statistically vigorous composite measure of related variables. As shown in Table 6, two factors emerge from the analysis. The first factor provides a clear-cut measure of credibility. Of the eleven items that loaded highly (the higher the load, the greater the relationship), most involved concepts treated as indicators of credibility in previous research.[54] The second factor, which loaded highly on items such as patriotism, morality, and concern about community, appears to deal with perceptions of the newspaper's level of concern about society. These two measures were

[54] Gaziano and McGrath, "Measuring the Concept," 454.

demonstrated to be reliable ($\alpha_1 = .94$; $\alpha_2 = .85$). As importantly, they meet the face-validity test: Their groupings make intuitive sense.

Table 6 here

With the aid of factor analysis, a statistically significant correlation was established between newspaper credibility and severity of factual mistakes, a relationship not detected with the believability index. However, the results overall were remarkably similar to those in the earlier analyses. While factor analysis provided little new information, it served to affirm that errors in a single story had little effect on overall newspaper credibility. And, if parsimony is a virtue, these results provide further evidence that Meyer's simple five-item additive index is an empirically valid scale for the measurement of credibility.

Through multiple regression, the combined effect of story inaccuracies and the seven items that comprise the story credibility index account for a modest but significant proportion of the variability in newsmaker view of the newspaper's overall credibility, $R = .413$, $F(3,221) = 14.963$, $p < .001$. Similarly, the combined effects of errors and story credibility account for a significant proportion of the variability in willingness to serve as a news source, $R = .512$, $F(3,225) = 26.273$, $p < .001$. As with prior research, these findings underscore that credibility is a multi-dimensional construct, of which accuracy is only a single element.

The data suggest inaccuracies have a demonstrable effect on newsmakers' perceptions of the story's credibility, and, in turn, story credibility influences perceptions of the newspaper's overall credibility. Still unresolved, however, is how these interrelated effects sort out. Through hierarchical regression, two models were analyzed. The first model employed the seven items used to evaluate story credibility. Almost identical to the results cited above, this model accounted for a modest but significant proportion of the variability in overall newspaper credibility, $R = .412$, $F(1,221) = 44.992$, $p < .001$. The second analysis evaluated whether story errors predicted overall newspaper credibility above and beyond the seven credibility items in the first model. The two accuracy measures – number of factual and subjective errors and severity of factual and subjective errors – accounted for a negligible and statistically insignificant proportion of newspaper credibility after controlling for the effects of story credibility (Table 7). The influence of story error on source willingness also was not significant after controlling for the effects of story credibility. These results do not suggest that inaccuracies were irrelevant, but that their contribution to explaining overall newspaper credibility was largely indistinguishable from other characteristics of story credibility.

Table 7 here

In addition, no statistically significant relationships could be identified between types of news sources (government officials, business representatives, etc.) and number or severity of errors reported, or between types of sources and story credibility. The relationship between frequency of newsmaker interviews and error or credibility scores also was not statistically significant. In short, the veteran newsmakers in this study were no more – or less – forgiving of errors than occasional newsmakers, nor did the role of newsmakers in the story seem to influence their perception of accuracy or credibility.

Discussion

From the newsmakers' view, more than half of the local news stories published by *The News & Observer* were in error – a rate of perceived inaccuracy surely to be of concern to the paper's management. As previously noted, the study's findings are not generalizable. Nonetheless, the implications are sobering for anyone who cares about the media. If *The News & Observer*, a Pulitzer prize-winning newspaper widely cited for excellence,[55] has such difficulty getting its facts straight, one can imagine what the results would be for news organizations less committed to quality journalism.

In an article entitled "To error is human," *Quill* magazine suggested that production automation hampers quality control as copy editors spend more time paginating papers and less time reading articles before they go into print. "Too much copy editing is done with a spell-checker only," a local publisher told *Quill*. This study's findings provide some empirical support for *Quill's* anecdotal account. Not only were factual errors prevalent but even misspellings and typos – the kinds of blunders that machines were supposed to catch – continued to find their way into the newspaper at near historic levels.

A cliché in journalism is that what really matters to newsmakers is that you get their names spelled right. In rating the severity of errors, newsmakers indeed showed that getting the name right is important to them. But of even greater concern, they said, were misleading headlines, misquotations, and wrong numbers. From the newsmakers' perspective, getting the facts straight clearly wasn't sufficient. Most bothersome were

[55] See, for example, Valerie Burgher, "A tough act to follow at *The News & Observer*," *Mediaweek*, June 23, 1997, 21; Philip Moeller, "The digitized newsroom," *American Journalism Review*, January-February 1995, 42-46; and Kelly Heyboer, "Computer –assisted reporting's 'Dirty Harry,' " *American Journalism Review*, June 1996, 13.

interpretive mistakes in which newsmakers believed the newspaper overplayed the story, left out vital information, or made other "errors of meaning." In fact, newsmakers rated all but one subjective error type – poor story display –higher in severity than the average factual error.

However, newsmakers also appeared strikingly forgiving of errors. The majority of the errors were considered minor. Many were deemed so inconsequential that a correction wasn't considered necessary. Despite the prevalence of error, the majority of newsmakers gave *The News & Observer* favorable credibility ratings and remained quite willing to be news sources again. Many politicians, company spokesmen, and other newsmakers may be indulgent of errors because they have a vested interest in serving as a news source. But the data indicate that ordinary citizens who have been caught up in the news were no less willing to be quoted in the paper again than veteran newsmakers.

While many errors were considered too small to correct, even newsmakers who felt egregiously misrepresented refused to seek a correction. The fact that more than 500 errors were detected, yet only three corrections were requested, vividly shows that news managers cannot rely on corrections as a safety valve for the venting of frustrations by wronged newsmakers. A proactive approach – random accuracy checks, publicizing correction policies, etc. – is needed to help the newspaper set the record straight. Newspapers also should consider displaying a correction with similar prominence as the story in error, providing a strong signal that they take errors seriously.

By several measures, the relationship between errors and newspaper credibility was statistically significant but weak. A somewhat stronger relationship could be established between errors and story credibility, especially when errors of judgment were involved. The data suggest that errors in reporting did not predispose newsmakers to avoid contact with the newspaper. But journalists should not find too much comfort from these findings. Unless the media's problems with accuracy and credibility are addressed, the public's contempt for the media likely will spread to newsmakers -- and journalists will feel even more "under siege," as the *American Journalism Review* characterized the onslaught of hostility directed at the media.[56]

These findings challenge several assumptions held by the author – and perhaps widely embraced in journalism. It has been suggested that errors in newspapers are not as widespread as the public perceives.[57] But with more than half of locally produced stories containing one or more errors, as newsmakers found in this study, the public's claim to finding errors several times a month or more seems hardly far-fetched. However, the link between accuracy and credibility might not be as strong as presumed. After controlling for a variety of aspects of story credibility, the effects of error on newspaper credibility and on source willingness was marginal. These results suggest accuracy is an important element of story credibility, but the influence of errors on any one story is not sufficient to be predictive of overall newspaper credibility.[58] For those judgments, newsmakers are most concerned with how the story was played. This suggests that the industry's quest for credibility should focus less on accuracy and more on "authenticity" – how well each story provides balance, perspective, and context. As Clarence Barron, former owner of *The Wall Street Journal* said, "Facts aren't the truth. They only indicate where the truth may lie."[59]

There's an underlying consistency to the survey data: errors of judgment were held more egregious than errors of fact; the newspaper was considered least credible in

[56] Linda Fibuch, "Under Siege," *American Journalism Review*, September 1995, 17-23.
[57] See, for example, Mitchell Charnley, "*Reporting* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1975), 29.
[58] Blankenburg had similar findings in his 1970 study, in which errors did not significantly affect newsmaker opinions of the newspaper. "News Accuracy," 384.
[59] Quoted by Phil Bronstein, "Both Sides of the Media Lens," *Brill's Content*, April 1999, 63.

regard to subjective sins such as sensationalism, bias, and failing to watch out for the reader's interests. The bottom line is that newsmakers expect the newspaper not only to get the story right, but to tell it in a manner that is straightforward, fair-minded and respectful of its readers.

One could surmise, mistakenly, from this study that the media's hand wringing over accuracy is overblown. But the focus of the industry's concern is on ordinary readers, who likely are much less indulgent of inaccuracies. Further study is needed to examine how the influence of error on readers differs from that on newsmakers. Longitudinal studies also would show the cumulative effect of errors on newspaper credibility. In addition, efforts should be made to more clearly understand the differences between what newsmakers see as an error of judgment but journalists view as their responsibility to pursue and report the news. While the link between errors and credibility seems obvious, this study shows that it is a complex, multi-faceted relationship – one that ought to keep yet another generation of accuracy researchers occupied.

Table 1. Percentages for types of newsmakers and times interviewed in past 12 months

Newsmaker type (N = 500)	**Percent**
Government Official	33.6
Business Representative	22.0
Citizen Activist	8.0
Witness/Bystander	1.6
Commentator	6.2
Other	25.6
Multiple roles	3.0
Times interviewed (N = 491)	
First-timers (0-1)	26.7
Rarely interviewed (2-3)	24.8
Occasional source (4-10)	24.6
Veteran newsmaker (11+)	23.8

2. Newspaper accuracy surveys compared

Year	Investigator	No. of stories	Errors per story	Percent with error(s)
1936	Charnley	591	.77	46 %
1965	Brown	143	.86	41
1967	Berry	270	1.52	54
1967-8	Blankenburg	332	1.17	60
1974	Marshall	267	1.12	52
1980	Tillinghast	270	.91	47
1999	Maier	286*	1.13*	55*

* To make these figures comparable to earlier surveys, the numbers here include only responses from the first newsmaker cited in each story. The total sample included 504 responses from 390 news stories. The per-story error rate based on the entire sample was 1.4. The percentage of stories with error(s) based on the entire sample was 59 percent.

Table 3. Error types ranked by mean severity rating
(Severity ranking on a 7-point scale: 1 = minor, 7 = major)

Factual errors	N	Error Severity	Standard Deviation
Inaccurate headline	33	4.48	1.94
Other	61	3.87	1.89
Time wrong	7	3.71	2.50
Name wrong	22	3.59	2.28
Numbers Wrong	46	3.43	1.92
Title wrong	21	3.33	2.35
Date wrong	10	3.20	2.30
Misspelling	17	3.18	2.32
Misquotation	58	3.09	1.73
Typographical error	14	2.14	1.56
Age wrong	5	1.80	1.79
Location wrong	3	1.00	
Address wrong	1	1.00	
Subjective errors			
Exaggerated display	14	4.71	2.09
Essential information missing	53	4.49	2.03
Numbers misleading	25	4.32	1.77
Quote(s) out of context	25	4.04	1.95
Significance overstated	45	3.89	1.99
Other subjective error	32	3.88	2.09
Signficance understated	14	3.79	2.29
Poor story display	5	3.40	2.61

Table 4. News media ranked by mean credibility score
Credibility score based on a 7-point scale: 1 = most credible, 7 = least credible

Media Type	**N**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
News & Observer	455	2.56	1.28
News magazines	416	3.20	1.22
Other newspapers	419	3.21	1.17
Radio	426	3.50	1.31
Television	432	3.92	1.42
Internet	373	4.50	1.49

Table 5. Bivariate correlation coefficients for accuracy and credibility.

	Story credibility index	Meyer believability index	Newsmaker willingness
Number of factual errors	.185**	.134**	.089
Number of subjective errors	.410**	.148**	.266**
Mean severity rating of factual errors	.398**	.138	.193*
Mean severity rating of subjective errors	.522**	.332**	.331**

* < .05
** < .001

Table 6. Factor Analysis for 16 items of the ASNE model credibility questionnaire.

	Factor 1: Credibility	Factor 2: Societal Concern
Unbiased	.795	.217
Fair	.792	.318
Separates fact from opinion	.791	.295
Factual	.790	.343
Accurate	.782	.304
Tells the whole story	.763	.283
Can be trusted	.759	.420
Doesn't sensationalize	.693	.365
Respects people's privacy	.653	.209
Watches out for your interests	.577	.539
Cares what people think	.532	.427
Patriotic	.090	.861
Moral	.320	.781
Concerned about community	.483	.659
Concerned about public interest	.502	.604
Reporters are well trained	.470	.519

Extraction method: Principal component analysis.
Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.

Table 7. Hierarchical regression analysis of story credibility and error variables on newspaper credibility.

Independent variables by blocks	Std. Beta	R-square change	Total R-square
1. Story credibility	.412	.170	.170*
2. Error			
Errors per survey	-.059		
Mean error rating	-.087	.001	.171*

* $p < .001$

Newspaper

Baseball Box Scores in the Newspaper: Helpful Statistics or Sports Hieroglyphics?

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ABSTRACT

A survey of fans in attendance at two Major League baseball games reveals that many fans experience difficulty when trying to decipher box scores in the newspaper. Several factors affected the ability to read box scores, including having played sports in high school, the sex of the respondent, and whether English was the person's native language. The authors suggest that publications include a legend on the agate page that explains the meanings of the abbreviations.

Baseball Box Scores in the Newspaper: Helpful Statistics or Sports Hieroglyphics?

Numerous researchers and writers for the popular press have examined the readability of newspaper copy and have pointed to difficult copy as a reason why readership continues to decline. The decline in readership has prompted changes in style and content at newspapers across the country (Gillman, 1994). Readability is a concern to on-line or "real-time" journalists as well, and research has shown no significant difference between newspaper articles and real-time articles (Aronson and Sylvie-Todd, 1996). Both forms are generally deemed more difficult than standard reading.

In that mass media outlets attempt to reach large heterogeneous audiences, the managers of those institutions typically strive to present as few challenges to easy communication as possible (Nolan, 1991). Fusaro and Conover (1983) note that reader satisfaction will plummet if stories are too difficult to read. But the readability of articles is a continuing concern. Though some writers consider "readability" a code word for watering down their work, major newspaper chains have wondered for years about a literacy problem in the United States and whether newspapers are too difficult to read for many potential customers (Haynes, 1989).

According to a research report from the American Society of Newspaper Editors' Journalism Values Institute, some people turn away from newspapers because they consider them dense, irrelevant, boring, and written in the often confusing technical language of experts (Hart, 1997). In the five decades since Flesch (1949) developed the first readability scale, numerous academic studies have documented ponderous leads (Cantalo, 1990), long, rambling sentences (Stapler, 1985), and readability scores consistently as high as 16 (Danielson and Bryan, 1964; Hoskins, 1973; Wanta and Gao, 1994). A news story with a readability score of 16 would require the reader to have completed college to fully comprehend the story. Difficult articles are found in both major metropolitan newspapers and smaller dailies (Gillman, 1994). Some argue that by writing articles in the "difficult-to-read" range, newspapers lose their effectiveness (Burgoon, Burgoon, and Wilkinson, 1981) and isolate large segments of the population (Smith, 1983).

Readability experts say that most people prefer their leisure reading to be about three grade levels below their educational level (Hart, 1993) and newspaper reading is something that most people engage in because they want to, not because they have to. The average American adult has completed one year of college, and the median educational attainment in the United States is 12.9. Half of the American population has a high school diploma or less (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1997).

The story-telling style of sports reporting has been characterized as more free-wheeling than news writing (Gillman, 1994) and some think the popularity of the sports section has slowed the atrophy of newspaper readership (Rambo, 1989). Other have found that dense prose dominates all sections of the newspaper, including sports (Stempel, 1981). One study documented the readability scores of sports articles at 18.7 (McAdams, 1992). The reading level required for an article scoring 18.7 is equivalent to that of a second-year doctoral student. In addition to articles that are sometimes difficult to read, the sports section of the newspaper contains one ore more pages of sports minutiae that might be compared to financial tables in another section of the newspaper - "a never-never land filled with arcane codes and hidden formulas that are not designed for mere mortals to comprehend or act upon" (Frailey, 1990, p. 83).

The purpose of this research is to examine readers' ability to decipher sports statistics found in newspapers, specifically, the baseball box score. The box score is the basic chart used to give statistics for a game, and includes sections for pitching, hitting, and fielding. It can include as many as 12 player designations and more than 30 other items.

The author of a popular sports writing text notes that if statistics are reported in a consistent manner day after day, readers learn the code (Garrison, 1993). However, although some publications have dropped box scores from their pages in lieu of more analysis and opinion (Moore, 1992; Elliott, 1992) others have continued to add categories and data, leaving only a complete play-by-play lacking (W's, L's, RBIs. . . , 1990). The box score is now nearly as detailed as a Melville novel (Lopez, 1997). Baseball has the most statistics of any sport reported and newspapers are continually coming up with new ones (Feinberg, 1992), putting readers in the position of having to learn the new abbreviations. Some of the new statistics are incredibly minute, particularly to the casual fan (Kazuba, 1997). There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that those for whom English is not the native language have particular difficulty. Immigrant Chinese who the New York Daily News tries to attract as readers call baseball box scores the most mystifying thing about American culture (Lopez, 1997).

Baseball is a sport well known for its accumulation of data and its aficionados are noted for their thirst for numbers and sometimes curious ways of interpreting the data (Casella and Berger, 1994). American sports reporting is heavily quantitative and a degree of spectator enjoyment is derived from being able to interpret the wealth of statistics that have evolved to describe the game (Guthrie, 1994). However, there is some disagreement about the importance of including so many statistics in the sports section of the newspaper. Some writers adhere to the adage that readers want sports pages filled with statistics, noting that some serious sports fans turn to the agate page to get their statistical fix for the day before reading stories about games (Feinberg, 1992). Others write that some readers feel a void if unable to read box scores in the morning paper (Vescey, 1994) and find them as essential as a morning cup of coffee (Lopez, 1997). But others equate reading through a plethora of stats with reading an algebra textbook, and doubt that would be appealing to most print media consumers (Gleisser, 1994).

Though most American newspapers devote a large amount of space to sports statistics, they offer only infrequent help to readers interpret the data - an occasional article explaining all the abbreviations and notations (Jones, 1986; How to read a box score, 1998).[1] The man credited with inventing the box score in the early 1850s, Henry Chadwick (Kazuba, 1997), might barely recognize its "mutant descendant" (Lopez, 1997).

The literature leads the investigators to the following research questions:

R1: What is the level of ability of average baseball fans (and potential newspaper readers) to recognize and understand the abbreviations and notations in a modern-day expanded box score?

R2: Which demographic factors, if any, affect that ability?

Method

In the summer of 1998, researchers distributed questionnaires at two Major League Baseball games in South Florida. Student volunteers asked fans attending the games to fill out the questionnaires. The first stadium visit netted 153 usable questionnaires; 154 fans filled out questionnaires during the researchers' second visit, for a total of 307 responses.

The questionnaires contained two sample box scores taken from a daily national newspaper. The box scores were chosen because between them they contained all the categories utilized by the publication on a daily basis. The respondents were asked to identify 30 abbreviations and notations used in the box scores. The first set of fans received no assistance. On the second stadium visit, the researchers supplied fans with a guide of where to find items within the box scores. For example, the guide noted that the abbreviation ab could be found in column 1, row 3. No other assistance was offered to the second group of respondents.

The questionnaires also contained several items to ascertain demographic information about the respondents, including age, sex, whether English was a respondent's native language, and whether a respondent played sports in high school. Fans were also asked to rate their level of understanding of baseball terminology, to indicate how readable they consider box scores to be, to indicate the degree to which they consider themselves sports fans, and to state how many box scores they read on an average day. All self-ratings were on 10-point scales.

The Respondents

The fans who completed questionnaires ranged in age from eight to 73. The median age was 31.1 years. Most of the respondents (73.9%) were males. Fifty (16.3%) indicated that English is not their native language. Nearly seven in 10 (68.7%) played high school sports; 43.6 percent played either baseball or softball in high school. A significant majority (76.5%) indicated that they understand baseball terminology quite well (eight or higher on a 10-point scale) and nearly as many (70.7%) categorized themselves as avid sports fans.

Nearly a third of the respondents (30.9%) reported reading all or nearly all of the box scores in the newspaper each day. More than a third (35.9%) indicated that they read five or fewer box score on a given day and 22.8 percent said they do not read box scores at all. Many (40.1%) of the respondents indicated that they taught themselves to read box scores, with another 30.3% being taught by their fathers. A coach, another family member, or a friend taught the rest. Many (37.4%) indicated that they consider box scores easy to read, but nearly as many (35.2%) said that box scores are very difficult to decipher.

Results

The respondents exhibited a wide range of knowledge of the items contained in the sample box scores. Of the 307 fans who completed questionnaires, none correctly identified all 30 abbreviations/notations and only one scored 29. Twenty correctly identified 28 of the items and another 20 were correct on 27. More than four in 10

(44.6%) were correct on 21 or more of the items, with 29.6% answering correctly on 10 or fewer. Table 1 summarizes the number of correct responses.

Insert Table1 about here

Many of the individual items contained in the box scores were known to most of the respondents, but several of the abbreviations were problematic for most of the fans. Table 2 shows the percentage of respondents correctly identifying each of the listed items in the sample box scores.

Insert table two about here

A number of variables affected how well respondents scored on the identification portion of the questionnaire. Males (M = 18.4) scored significantly higher than females (M = 10.7) $F(1,296) = 45.92$, $p < .001$. Language was also a significant variable, as the 50 respondents who indicated that English is not their native language had more difficulty identifying the items in the box scores (M = 13.4) than did those for whom English is the first language (M = 17.1) $F(1,305) = 7.21$, $p < .009$. Those who played sports in high school (M = 18.02) scored significantly higher than those who did not engage in scholastic competition (M = 12.47) $F(1,284) = 6.09$, $p < .02$. The age of the respondents had no significant effect.

There was a significant correlation between the self-ratings on two scales and the scores achieved. Those who reported that they understand sports terminology well tended to score well Adj. $R^2 = .59, p < .001$, as did those who characterized themselves as avid sports fans Adj. $R^2 = .42, p < .001$. Regarding the relative difficulty of reading baseball box scores, there was no significant difference between those who report understanding terminology and those who do not, nor between those who describe themselves as avid fans and those who do not.

The session during which a respondent took part in the study was also highly significant as those for whom a guide was provided scored higher (M = 18.9) than those in the first group, M = 14.4) who were not told where to locate particular items $F(1,306) = 20.41, p < .001$. Both males and females in the second session scored higher than their counterparts in the first session, with females benefiting the most from having the guide available. Table 3 shows that males in the latter session outscored those in the first session by more than three and a half points. The average score for females in the second session was more than four and a half points higher than for females in session one.

Insert table 3 about here

In answering open-ended questions, some respondents indicated that they do not read box scores because they get all the information they require from television of the Internet, or simply do not have the time to read box scores. General thoughts from fans about box scores are that they are confusing, too complex, and boring. Several fans suggested including explanations of the abbreviations in the form of a legend.

Discussion

The majority of respondents to this survey labeled themselves as avid sports fans, think they understand baseball terminology well, and read at least a few box scores each day. Essentially, it was a sample of knowledgeable people. Yet more than half of the respondents said box score were moderately to very difficult to read. The readability ratings assigned to box scores by the respondents was not correlated with the scores achieved, nor was level of fandom. Many of those who scored well and many of those who classified themselves as avid fans said it is difficult to decipher baseball box scores. During the study, researchers observed some fans spending as much as 45 minutes trying to figure out the meaning of certain items, perhaps trying to prove to themselves or to someone else that they are as knowledgeable about baseball as they claim to be. We suspect that most readers will not spend 45 seconds trying to decipher something they do not understand.

Some people simply cannot crack the code, and even avid baseball fans have difficulty with some of the abbreviations and notations, particularly those that are recent additions. The items in the sample box score that seemed most problematic for the widest range of fans were items that have not been used as for as long as have items such as ERA or 1B. That no one correctly identified all of the items listed in the sample box scores indicates that there seems to be a learning curve involved when a new item is introduced, even for those most knowledgeable about the sport. The results also indicate that those who have "grown up around" sports have a decided advantage over those who are newer fans. This finding is consistent with earlier readability research, which showed that familiarity with a subject leads people to rate articles about that subject in the easy-to-read range.

In modern sports, (and media coverage of it) there seems to be a statistic for everything: A player's performance on grass vs. Astroturf, in domes, on particular days of the week, against left-handed middle relievers. There certainly is nothing wrong with including any and all of that information in the newspaper, if readers know what they are looking at.

One reason behind including all the detail might be fantasy baseball leagues that allow fans to construct their own teams "on paper" and pit them against one another, at times with wagering involved. But by continually adding information to box scores, newspapers might be catering to the needs of a few at expense of attracting the many. However, it is possible to serve fantasy leaguers, avid fans, and novices alike. This study showed that offering the slightest bit of direction to help fans decipher the box scores markedly improved their scores. Merely pointing out where an abbreviation could be found offered enough context for fans to be able to figure out some of the more difficult items.

Based on these findings, we suggest that newspapers include a legend on the agate page. It would not be necessary to define items or tell readers how to calculate slugging percentage, but the legend could indicate what the abbreviations stand for. This might be helpful for more than the novice fan. The web master at the Tallahassee Democrat who created the page on how to read a box score notes that many fans are sheepish about admitting that they really do not know what a particular abbreviation stands for and appreciate the assistance (L.K. Mirrer, personal conversation, January 5, 1999). We suspect that many readers would react similarly to the inclusion of a legend on the agate page - even those readers who would be reluctant to admit needing to refer to it.

Notes

[1] At least one publication, the Tallahassee (Fla.) Democrat, includes a section on its web page that explains the abbreviations contained in a box score and describes how some statistics are figured.

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Table 1
Number of Items Correctly Identified

Score	Percent
0-5	15.0
6-10	14.6
11-15	14.7
16-20	11.1
21-25	25.7
26-29	18.9

Table 2
Identification of Box Score Items

Item	Correct response	% answering correctly
ab	at bats	92.2
e	error	85.7
so	strike outs	80.8
ERA	earned run average	79.2
ph	pinch hitter	76.2
lob	left on base	73.3
DP	double play	69.1
ip	innings pitched	68.4
er	earned runs	68.1
36 (Anaheim)	total at bats for team	67.1
2B	double	66.8
bi	(runs) batted in	65.8
HBP	hit by pitch	65.8
X	home team did not bat in the bottom of the ninth inning	61.9
Att.	attendance	59.9
SF	sacrifice fly	59.0
CS	caught stealing	55.4
W, 3-1 (Chicago)	pitcher who got the win, his season record	50.5
T	time (length) of contest	48.5
GIDP	grounded into double play	45.0
nickname, visitors	White Sox	44.3
RBI: Baines (7)	his seventh run batted in for season	41.7
lo	left on	41.4
IBB	intentional base on balls	41.0
WP	wild pitch	33.2
Alicea (5) lo	Alicea responsible for leaving five runners on base	30.9
bf	batters faced	29.6

S (batting)	sacrifice	26.4
balls by Stottlemyre	total pitches minus strikes, 48	20.5
H (pitching)	hold by middle reliever	1.3

Table 3
Scores for Males and Females by Session

Sex	Session	Mean	N
Males	One	16.5	107
Males	Two	20.1	120
Females	One	9.0	43
Females	Two	13.6	27

Newspaper

Diversity Efforts in the Newsroom: Doin' the Right Thing or Just A Case of Show Me the Money?

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Abstract

Researchers analyzed 76 interviews with reporters and editors at a respected western U.S. newspaper involved in enhancing diversity of its newspaper content and newsroom staffing. Researchers sought to determine if market-driven considerations and "quality" journalism were perceived by respondents as mutually exclusive. The study confirms previous findings that journalists consider knowledge about the business of their newspaper to be empowering, not necessarily in conflict with the editorial mission.

Introduction

ASNE goal 2000. News 2000. Partners 2000. What these programs share is not a Y2K problem but a belief that newspapers by the new millennium must be more responsive to diverse audiences and advertisers if they are to survive. As media channels proliferate and penetration rates decline, newspapers are putting the word *profit* in their mission statements and turning to marketing concepts such as branding and database management to bolster flagging circulation figures and increase advertising revenues (Liebeskind, 1996; Sharp & Perucci, 1997).

It is now the norm, not the exception, to use readership research to determine content and format (Schoenbach & Bergen, 1998). Targeted content (i.e., geographically zoned issues, special sections, and niche publications) is growing exponentially (Curtin, 1998; Sharp & Perucci, 1997). A new tabloid publication—60504—is named for the zip code it targets and delivers to advertisers, a high-end market the Claritas research group labels *Kids and Cul-de-sacs*. "We are branding new products because of the market realities," says Art Wible, Copley company president (in Fitzgerald, 1997, p. 13). In fall 1997 the Newspaper Association of America launched a 3-year, $18 million ad campaign because "We have to do a much better job of getting up close and personal with readers and advertisers alike and tell the story of an aggressive, and very relevant business" (John Sturm in Consoli, 1997a, p. 6; 1997b).

While the industry has long recognized the need to provide relevant content to readers and deliver that reader base to advertisers, critics charge that the recent emphasis on marketing is overshadowing journalism's social responsibility function (McManus, 1994; Underwood, 1993b). This case study analyzes 76 in-depth interviews with reporters and editors at a large, U.S. western metropolitan daily to determine staff attitudes toward the new publisher's program to enhance diversity in newspaper content and newsroom staffing while increasing profits through broadened circulation into growing ethnic communities.

Background

Market-Driven Journalism

Much of the evidence for *market-driven journalism* is anecdotal. James Squires (1993) and Doug Underwood (1993) wrote tell-all books about their experiences as top editors who quit over disagreements with management about market issues. The concept received more rigorous academic treatment with the publication of John McManus' book (1994) *Market-Driven Journalism: Let the Citizen Beware?,* in which he proposes a microeconomic model of news production.

Based on microeconomic theory, McManus (1994) states that competition and exchange in four distinct markets drives news production. Those markets are investors, advertisers, sources, and consumers. Of these four markets, only investors are part of the corporate structure, theoretically giving them the most influence. Advertisers are the next most powerful influence because they are the largest revenue producers, compelling media to act prudently so as not to antagonize advertisers with adverse editorial copy. Sources and news departments enjoy a directly reciprocal relationship, with sources depending on the media to carry their information to the public and the media depending on sources for information. In the fourth competitive market, consumers' attention is traded for information. In turn, the media seek consumer attention to sell it to advertisers.

Newsmakers operate not only within the confines of these four market exchanges but also within the constraints of organizational culture, which is governed by two sets of norms: journalism (editorial) and business (McManus, 1994). Journalism norms judge news value based on public need to know and objectivity without regard to the money or time necessary to achieve these goals. Business norms embody the market theory of news construction, which states that news departments will compete "to offer the least expensive mix of content that protects the interests of sponsors and investors while garnering the largest audience advertisers will pay to reach" (p. 85).

McManus describes news as "an elaborate compromise" between the two ideals governing news production and among the four market forces acting on the media corporation (McManus, 1994, p. 37). This compromise yields "the least expensive mix of content that protects the interest of sponsors and investors while garnering the largest audience advertisers will pay to reach" (McManus, 1994, p. 85). Although McManus claims the business and journalistic models are not necessarily mutually exclusive, during the frequent instances in which they do diverge their influence is unequal: "Where investor direction is for maximum profit, market norms will dominate journalism norms when the two conflict" (McManus, 1994, p. 35). In McManus' terms (1995), economic rationalism is replacing social responsibility as the reasoning underlying media routines.

Empirical tests of the model are few. An earlier survey of newspaper staffers, found that staff at chain-owned papers believed their papers stressed business principles, whereas staff at family-owned papers believed their papers stressed editorial autonomy (Underwood & Stamm, 1992). A slight majority of staffers at all papers thought that when business principles were given more emphasis, the overall quality of the paper was better. The authors conclude

> Journalism purists may be dismayed that market-oriented principles have so deeply permeated the newsroom. . . . Newspapers are catering to the market-place with their greater emphasis on customer-oriented journalism. But they appear to be doing this while trying to preserve the traditional journalistic values of editorial autonomy and community service so prized by news workers. (Underwood & Stamm, 1992, p. 317)

In a survey of editors and reporters, Coulson (1994) found that 47% did not think profit concerns were placed before quality concerns at their paper, 39% said they were, and only 14% gave a neutral response. These results suggest market-driven journalism is a divisive professional issue.

Recent work by Beam (1996) found that a marketing orientation may be best predicted by newspapers' own uncertainty over how best to serve readers and not by external factors, such as competition and ownership. As changes in a newspaper's environment occur, management may decide to shift from a reliance on professional news judgment to one on market research to determine the goodness of fit between content and community.

In a follow-up study, Beam (1998) found that the relative strength of the market orientation at a paper does not usually affect the attention given to issues. In the seven instances in which a significant difference was found the results were counterintuitive; papers with a stronger market orientation were more dedicated to traditional coverage, significantly more likely to take an adversarial stance in their reporting, and professed a strong commitment to journalistic excellence. In turn, these papers tended to be larger circulation, situated in larger population centers, and owned by larger chains. These findings are consonant with those of Demers (1993, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1998), who has investigated the role of structural pluralism and corporate newspaper structure on content and found that larger corporate papers tend to exercise more autonomy and consequent editorial vigor.

Curtin (1996) used discriminant analysis on survey measures of market orientation to determine if McManus' model could correctly predict ownership structure. The model correctly identified 76% of independently owned papers and 65% of chain-owned papers, but only after the confounding variable of public ownership was removed. Factors that did not contribute significantly to the model's predictive power were the use of readership research, carrying stories that might offend advertisers, publishing as editorial copy material from the marketing department, and the use of public relations information subsidies. Consonant with Beam's 1996 study, these findings suggest that market pressures are more internally driven than externally derived (Curtin, 1998).

Clearly the issue of market-driven journalism remains a divisive one in the profession. The literature suggests that ownership structure and variables are not strong predictors of a market-driven orientation, whereas internal uncertainty over readership concerns and steady sources of advertising revenues are strong predictors. One source of that uncertainty may be due to the increasing fragmentation of markets as well as the need to address increasingly diverse audiences. Both sources are evident in the market area of the newspaper that forms the basis of this study.

Diversity

Along with the increased emphasis on readership research to increase circulation has come the realization that certain populations have been traditionally under-served by newspapers, especially in urban areas. Circulation efforts have concentrated on wealthy readers who provide an attractive demographic to advertisers. Covering poor, inner city peoples and issues was deemed counterproductive because they were neither the paper's readers nor the advertisers target market (Curtin, 1996). Even today, the publishers of papers facing declining penetration, among them *The New York Times*, talk instead in terms of "market effectiveness"--providing advertisers with upscale readers (Cranberg, 1997; Sharp & Perruci, 1997). Market research, however, has demonstrated that such an attitude is elitist and, in many cases, ignores the reality of large urban markets. The population of these areas is not only ethnically diverse, but the distribution of wealth and power is increasingly diversified (U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov).

New professional programs demonstrate how papers can use minority consumer research to develop editorial and business opportunities through special sections and new outlooks (Sacharow, 1996). Promoters point to successes such as Knight Ridder's *Nuevo Herald*, which has exhibited healthy economic support from a growing subscriber and advertiser base. Brislin and Williams (1996), speaking of diversity, claim "It is basic economic sense that if you are to build circulation or ratings within a community, you must cover it" (p. 17). Despite the lack of formal evidence for such a claim, observers of the Unity '94 conference noted "A favorite line from executives was some variation of 'We want diversity not just because it's the right thing to do — but because it's the smart thing for business too'" (Fitzgerald, 1994, p. 16). Pease (1990) takes the economic import of diversity even further: "Diversity is an . . . economic [issue]; what's at risk is nothing less than survival of newspapers as a mass medium" (pp. 24-25).

To create diverse content, newspapers have sought to hire more minority journalists. A 1996 APME survey found that over three-fourths of journalists believed the racial composition of news staffs should reflect that of society and even more (86%) believed a diverse news staff resulted in better and more credible news coverage (Shipler, 1998). To address these issues, ASNE in 1978 set a goal of 26% minority employment rate by the year 2000—the number chosen to match the prevalence of minorities in the population. At the time, minority employment in newsrooms was not quite 4%. In 1997, ASNE announced the goal would not be met; current minority representation stood at 11.5%, and studies demonstrated that the nation's minority population was growing at a faster rate than that of minority employment in newsrooms (Fitzgerald, 1997; Haws, 1991). As of 1994, 46% of daily newspapers had no minority employees, and those who did were experiencing only an 80% retention rate (Anfuso, 1995; Sunoo, 1994).

In return, some in the newsroom have complained of "knee-jerk diversity" or "affirmative angst," resulting in a loss of talent in the face of political correctness (Stein, 1997). Many industry analysts believe that if the focus is on hiring rather than on content, the result is newsroom polarization rather than unity (Stein, 1997). A 1996 APME study found that 40% of white journalists believed minorities were held to a lower standard, whereas 66% of blacks thought minorities were held to higher standards (Shipler, 1998). Similar findings resulted from a 1996 ASNE study: 54% of blacks, but only 12% of whites, believed minorities were treated unfairly in the newsroom (Shipler, 1998). In a telephone survey of minority newsroom managers, one complained that minorities are "held to a higher standard of proof" (Pease & Stempel, 1990, p. 71). Many respondents spoke of the pressures and isolation inherent in being a "token" or "panic" hire (p. 74).

It is also not clear whether increasing the number of minorities in the newsroom results in improved coverage of minorities. It has been demonstrated that typical mainstream coverage of minorities, stemming from newsrooms with little or no minority representation, is limited in scope and often results in stereotypic depictions (see, for example, DeLouth & Woods, 1996). Other studies have demonstrated that minority media cover different issues and frame issues differently than their mainstream competition (see, for example, Turner & Allen, 1997). But as one critic notes, simply hiring more minorities may not be the answer.

> By some mysterious alchemy, the whole task of providing better coverage of minority issues seems to have become tied to the effort to bring more minority individuals into journalism. The idea seems to be that if we can just get more minority reporters into our newsrooms, they will make sure that we provide more accurate and representative coverage of minorities in society. (Martindale, 1988, p. 2-3)

The few empirical studies of the issue suggest such skepticism is warranted: a review of ASNE proceedings found that editors believed increased numbers of minority hires has not resulted in improved minority coverage (Najjar, 1995), and a survey of members of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists notes that the increasing diversity of communities may one cause: "The more integrated a community, the less important a role ethnicity plays in newsgathering" (Leibler, 1988, p. 43).

The literature on diversity mirrors that of market-driven journalism: these issues remain sharply divisive in the field. Content audits have been praised for ensuring minority representation and damned for providing meaningless quotas that ignore the real issues. For some, market-driven journalism and commitment to diversity represent savvy and informed industry moves to renew public faith in newspapers and to reconnect with alienated readers. For others, they represent the loss of all that journalism in a free speech environment has traditionally stood for: supplying the public with what it needs to know, serving as the watchdog of government, demonstrating independence from special interests, and exercising complete autonomy over news matters. While these issues remain hotly debated in the macrocosm of American journalism, they remain of equal concern in the microcosm of the newsroom of the metropolitan daily newspaper in which these interviews were conducted.

The Subject Newspaper and Its Constituency

This study was conducted at the aforementioned U.S. western metropolitan daily. The paper is among the largest-circulating daily newspapers in the nation and is highly influential in its region of the country.

This newspaper serves a region that is among the most economically, culturally and ethnically diverse metropolitan areas in the United States. Its market area is roughly the size of the state of Ohio. The region is home to several million residents, well over 100 language communities, and scores of incorporated cities. The most rapidly growing non-white ethnic group made up 31% of the population in the newspaper's circulation area in 1991. That proportion could double by the year 2000.

In 1995, the newspaper's publisher decided to take a more aggressive marketing approach to help pull the newspaper out of the severe advertising recession it had been experiencing. Along with this more market-driven approach, new consideration was given to enhancing diversity. This diversity was encouraged in the newsroom in the form of hiring, in the newspaper itself in the form of attention to the diversity of content, and in the publication's overall product philosophy, resulting in ethnically targeted offshoots. A new advertising campaign accompanied these internal changes, one designed to promote the newspaper's brand name and benefits rather than specific features of the newspaper.

Guided by this new market-driven approach to the issue of diversity, the editorial staff sought vertical integration of its product line. It created narrowly focused new packages designed to establish brand loyalty among the growing segments of the region's population while increasing ad revenues. The publisher's new approach was to seek to be successful on the business side in order to nourish the health and success of the newspaper's editorial side.

To demonstrate its concern about the issue of diversity, the newspaper appointed a diversity commission whose task it was to encourage newsroom dialogue that began in response to internal concern that certain communities were not being adequately covered by the newspaper. The newspaper made a commitment to minority hiring, nearly doubling its minority editorial staffers. The newspaper even experimented with editions and special products targeted at communities not well represented among its readership. These included a weekly tabloid, a Monday forum for community columns and letters, even a bilingual edition.

Not everyone greeted these changes with approval. Critics contend that these changes resulted in formulaic content that panders to advertisers, not readers. Controversy erupted when it was suggested that the paper was setting hiring quota goals for the numbers of minorities and women. It was also rumored that raises and promotions would be withheld from editors and reporters who failed to meet designated numbers. Staff reportedly resisted the plan of 'affirmative action quoting.' The newspaper's publisher subsequently made it clear that the hiring figures were desirable goals, not mandated quotas.

Still, the changes have much support in an industry not known for its business acumen. Marilyn Lee, vice president of employee relations for a major newspaper, says change just makes good business sense: "If newspapers don't reflect and serve their communities, readers and advertisers won't support them" (in Sunoo, 1994). That paper's parent company, recently announced that the pay scale for top editors and publishers will soon be based in part on female and minority hires and readership (Perruci, 1998). Do such programs amount to reverse discrimination, intimating that talented white males need not apply?

Scholarship in this area is negligible. Therefore, the 35 hours of in-depth interviewing analyzed for this study offers a rich understanding. The attempt to understand attitudes newspaper editorial staffers hold toward their publisher's drive to promote diversity while increasing profits is both a rare and important glimpse at the face of the future of journalism and its practitioners.

Research Questions

The researchers sought to gain some insight into three issues in their interviews with 76 reporters and editors:

1) What motives do editorial staffers ascribe to the publisher's emphasis on diversity — better business, better journalism, or both?
2) Irrespective of their attitudes about motive, what do the journalists believe will be the result of this emphasis on diversity, and will that result benefit the newspaper's content, bottom-line, or both?
3) Does the newspaper fit the discriminant model proposed by McManus (1995) and previously tested by Curtin (1996, 1998, 1999)?

Methodology

Sample and Interview Procedure

The convenience sample examined for this study consisted of 76 subjects who worked in editorial positions at a major western daily newspaper. The subjects were reporters, editors, or photographers whose experience with the company ranged from a few years to decades. These journalists worked in a news organization participating in a larger study of the diversity issue. The purpose of that larger longitudinal study is to examine broadly the extent to which diversity is a concern in employment and editorial practices at the publishing company.

In drawing the editorial employee sample, only employees with an active role in creating daily newspaper content were selected. Journalists were invited to make appointments with interviewers to talk about diversity matters. Interviews averaged about one-half hour each and took place during two separate visits to the newsroom, with each visit lasting two days.

Media researchers at a midwestern school of journalism constructed an interview guide. Five senior researchers from the school conducted the interviews: one African-American, one Latino, and three Caucasians. The interview guide was used to assure continuity during interviews conducted by the five different researchers. The guide was a set of general questions and probes relevant to the larger study's primary research objective of assessing diversity issues in the newsroom and diversity in the content of the newspaper.

As part of the interview guide, respondents were asked the following question: "What do you believe is the company's motivation in its concern about diversity issues?" The question sought to elicit responses ascribing the publisher's concern about diversity to either editorial content or market-driven issues or both. Responses were open-ended. Respondents were candid and deliberate in their assessment, taking their time to consider and then respond. Their responses to that question formed the basis for this inquiry.

All newsroom staffers participated voluntarily in the study. The publishing company encouraged participation through a series of memos that emphasized the importance of the study and the need for candid input from staffers. While this may be deemed by some as "pressure" from their employer, there was no evidence that those who volunteered felt compelled to participate. The respondents' candor during interviews suggests that the independence of an academic team and the disclosure statement from the team's Human Subjects Review Board offered adequate assurance of confidentiality. Subsequent assessment of the interviews suggested strongly that the candid views expressed were truly those of the respondents.

The interviews were conducted at the employer's place of business over a three-day period. All interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants. This allowed the researchers to pay careful attention to each participant's responses while taking minimal notes.

Following the interview guide, each session moved from general to specific questions. This afforded the subject ample time to offer his or her opinions about the factors affecting the stance of the organization in the areas being studied.

Data Analysis Plan

In analyzing the interview data, the researchers employed the analytic induction strategy described in Wimmer and Dominick (1997) as adapted by Stainback and Stainback (in Wimmer and Dominick, 1988, p. 88). One of the researchers for this study reviewed transcripts of the taped interview data, as well as the notes of the interviewers. The researcher used this information to select themes and formulate the research questions. Cases were examined to determine the viability of the themes and research questions. Negative cases were sought. With new observations gathered from successive examination of the interview cases, the themes and research questions assumed their final form.

A second researcher then independently examined the interview data and interviewers' notes focusing exclusively on the market-driven versus quality journalism issues. To ensure that all interview comments regarding the market-driven motives of diversity initiatives at the publishing company had been gathered, this second researcher listened to each of the 76 interviews without benefit of seeing the first set of transcriptions. The researcher listened for and transcribed all editorial respondent comments regarding market-driven motives of the publishing company, irrespective of the factors to which the market-driven comments referred. This was done to provide fresh perspective in challenging, modifying and adding to the analysis. The two researchers then compared their separate findings to ensure thoroughness, accuracy in transcription and validity of the theme statements.

Findings and Discussion

What Is the Motive for the Publisher's Emphasis on Diversity?

This is the fundamental question the researchers sought to answer. The very first respondent set the tone for virtually all respondents who addressed the issue, saying:

> Because they (the publishers) are not stupid. Bottom line. The city is changing demographically. The Latino community is growing and growing fast. The Asian American community is growing fast.... It's the future of this city and I think the paper is smart enough to realize that financially.

If the first respondent appeared to offer a seemingly one-sided, market-driven point of view toward the publisher's impetus for diversity coverage, one suggesting as does McManus (1995) that economic considerations were supplanting journalistic ones, subsequent respondents clarified the issue.

One (Respondent #14) said:

> I think there is a genuine desire to improve the coverage of our community. (The city) is changing and we have to keep up with that change. So, I think it's partly journalistic. It's also financial in that we have to bring in readers and one way to do it is to make the paper accessible to them. So, partly it's that.

Added another (Respondent #19):

> (The reason) is twofold. There is a feeling among the top editors and managers that it is the right thing to do. Diversify the workforce. I also think it's a business thing: to have a diverse workforce makes the product better at covering diverse communities.

Said yet another respondent (Respondent #36):

> Certainly, I think increasing circulation is a major component in it. But one would hope that...journalists want to be able to do a better job. And I would hope that's the feeling at the senior level, too. Doing the best job you can covering the community. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that (financial concerns). Someone has to worry about increasing circulation. Reporters and editors don't really know about that.

To some extent most respondents seemed to accept *both* journalistic improvements and financial necessity as the twin motives for their newspaper publisher's push to enhance diversity in the newsroom and in the newspaper. In fact, of the 21 respondents who addressed both journalistic and market-driven pressures directly, not one mentioned anything negative about financial considerations.

This is not to say the responses were completely absent of any concern. Rather, like Respondent #40, the participants seemed genuinely reflective and desirous that their newspaper change to reflect the changes that were ongoing in their community:

> I think (the effort to enhance diversity coverage) is market-driven, but I don't mean that in the typical, pejorative sort of way...the quick response of jadedness. I think it's market-driven in the sense that...if you say you want to serve the community better, to do that they have to purchase the paper. I think it's just sort of a pragmatic thing. Population is growing and changing. You have to respond somehow. So, I guess I would say it's market-driven, but I don't mean market-driven necessarily as a strictly commercial decision.

The emphasis of most respondents focused on market-driven forces as a necessary consideration in a city that is changing. Some respondents, among them Respondent #49, noted that the immediacy of the drive to enhance diversity was a function of the newspaper *publisher's* concerns that the paper reflect the community:

> This is not the kind of city it once was. If we are going to grow as a newspaper, we have to reflect the differences that are out there in the world. This has proceeded with fits and starts throughout the years. I don't think it's a new concern, but now, it's coming from the top.

In sum, all respondents cited both journalistic and market-driven considerations as twin reasons for the newspapers' executives emphasis on diversity.

Beneficial or Detrimental?

Ascribing the motivation of the paper's publisher in retooling philosophy is one thing; however, determining whether the ultimate result of the change in philosophy is positive or negative may be quite another. To gain some insight into this newspaper's journalists' attitude toward the consequences of the change in philosophy, all 76 interviews were reviewed in full to uncover and transcribe responses that addressed the direction of attitudes toward a more market-driven philosophy.

Again, the researchers found that virtually all respondents who commented on the positive or negative nature of the philosophical changes had positive attitudes toward its effect on the newspaper, both as a journalistic product and as a healthy business entity. Indeed, they seem to reflect the attitude that business health was good for journalistic health. Said Respondent #34:

> You know, every paper has a market they want to reach. I don't think there's anything wrong per se in picking out a group of people that you want to reach.

Respondent #36 responded in a similar vein, saying "Someone has to worry about increasing circulation. Reporters and editors don't really know about that."

Respondent #37 tied the ongoing changes in the circulation region with the more competitive business atmosphere in which the newspaper now operates:

> Numbers attract advertisers. The city has seen a dramatic change in the major advertisers. We have lost supermarkets. We have lost department stores. We have lost all those big, full-page ads that made us a fat, rich newspaper. We have to fight for those ads now that used to just float in before. To do that, we have to have numbers. We have to have the demographics.

These, the reader is reminded, are *journalists*, with no credentialed expertise or responsibility for the business side of their newspaper.

The journalists who responded to these issues seem to have the attitude that the change to a more market-driven philosophy on the part of the publisher was one motivated by both journalistic and business concerns. The diversity effort was also regarded as being largely positive in terms of its effect on the newspaper, making it a vehicle that better represented its readership.

This is not to say that the journalists had no concern for becoming too focused on market-driven motivations. Most, like Respondent #37, drew the line at altering the editorial content for solely market-driven reasons:

> If you start monkeying with the content, that's where most of us are having a problem. So, I don't have a problem with research or that sort of thing to find out how we can do what we do better. It's when you start skewing the product and changing content....

However, the same respondent quickly added:

> I've never had that happen. I've never been told 'write this story differently' (because of financial concerns)...and I don't know anyone who has (been told to do that).

Discussion

The 76 interview subjects offered their comments both in response to a direct question concerning their publisher's motivation, and as unprompted remarks. Though only a sampling of the more pertinent comments are included in the two preceding sections, the comments are representative of those expressed by all respondents.

Many subjects experienced difficulty with the term "market-driven journalism" because it has taken on a pejorative meaning among many journalists. Respondents were hesitant to use it, particularly in reference to the paper for which they worked. Yet respondents did believe that their paper should be more responsive to present and prospective readers. In *this* sense, they embraced the use of the term "market-driven journalism" and believe it reflects a commitment to serving the changing and diverse community of readers in their market area.

What emerges from the data, then, may be recognition that in today's marketplace, one increasingly competitive for audience attention, both traditional journalistic norms and business norms form a necessary baseline.

Unlike McManus, who often places these two in competition, the respondents in this study viewed the inherent tension between these two sets of norms as a healthy relationship, provided the tension remained within bounds. Just as some performance anxiety can improve a performance whereas too much can destroy the performance, the subjects in this study viewed some tension between journalism and business norms as healthy. It can offer a competitive edge. These results confirm those of Underwood and Stamm (1982), who found that reporters believed an emphasis on market principles provided a healthy environment for focusing on the content of the newspaper, provided those market principles did not override journalistic ones.

Other studies have found that editors welcome more interaction between the editorial and business sides of newspapers, which would give editors more of a boundary-spanning role (Curtin, 1996). They believe that greater awareness of all aspects of producing a newspaper throughout the organization will result in a better product by encouraging the editorial side to be more responsive to readers. The comment by one respondent that reporters and editors do not know about issues such as increasing circulation may be something of an anachronism. Reporters and editors want to know more about their audience members and how best to serve them not as a "selling out" of the traditional norms of journalism, but as an expansion of their traditional role to include market considerations and demographic changes as well.

Certainly the field-based observations from this study confirm the quantitative ones of Beam (1998), namely that newspapers respond more to uncertainty in the journalism environment and the resulting internal uncertainty than they do to deterministic microeconomic market forces, such as McManus (1994) suggests. Faced with a growing, increasingly diverse prospective audience, the newspaper's editorial-side respondents are increasingly introspective about how to best meet the needs of this new audience. This introspection includes market-driven considerations and only becomes dangerous when the overall journalistic mission of the newspaper appears imperiled.

This study, then, is part of a growing body of literature that suggests that, in the newspaper industry at least, McManus' model may not be sufficient to explain the dynamics that take place when the need for the paper to thrive as a business is co-mingled with the traditional public watchdog and social conscience roles of journalism.

As Showmaker and Reese (1991) note, economic pressures in the broadcast industry, which served as the basis for McManus' work, are more severe and may be more determinative of the pressures and conflict experienced in broadcast news. In the only somewhat less competitive atmosphere of newspapers, a healthy tension may exist between editorial and business forces that encourages newspapers to not only do the best job of providing readers what they need to know, but also to be responsive to what it is readers want to know. Responding to one's audience is a traditional function of marketing.

All of the journalists who commented on the journalistic versus market-driven concerns of their publisher's goal of enhancing diversity in coverage and representation at the newspaper agreed that *both motives* were in effect and, in fact, diversity would encourage circulation growth and financial health of the newspaper.

These expressed opinions can be seen either as the genuine beliefs of a generation of journalists unencumbered by the need to hold a traditional ideology or the guarded statements of employees concerned about holding their jobs. There is evidence to support both possibilities.

By embracing both social and economic goals as being attainable through the adoption of a diversity strategy, the respondents may be manifesting one of two cognitive strategies first identified by Stamm and his associates in the growing literature of public relations (Stamm and Bowes, 1972).

Stamm referred to these cognitive strategies as *hedging* and *wedging*. People are said to *hedge* when they simultaneously hold two seemingly conflicting beliefs; they *wedge* when they choose to hold one belief and reject the other. One way of explaining our respondents' belief that both traditional journalistic goals and market realities argue for a policy of diversity is to say that the respondents were *hedging*. Fueling this possibility is the fact that the newspaper in question recently suffered permanent personnel cutbacks numbering in the hundreds in the wake of a persistent decline in advertising revenue. Threats of losing one's job can be strong motivation to embrace acceptable attitudes about a policy change when one has little choice anyway.

There is a more positive way of interpreting the respondents' expressed attitudes. Their region is indeed changing, as is the nation as a whole. As several respondents stated outright or inferred, Hispanic and Asian minority groups would soon combine to form, along with African Americans, the region's majority population. Respondents believe that if the newspaper's publisher overlooked this fact, the paper's *journalistic* mission and credibility would suffer and its circulation would decline. Whereas the publisher *may* be marketing the newspaper as a business, the respondents may see this as an opportunity to market the newspaper as a *journalistic* product. The respondents are either hedging well, or they do not believe that journalistic considerations have been sacrificed to those of business. Rather, they perceive a healthy tension and an expansion of roles has followed in the wake of the publisher's enhanced diversity effort.

The findings of this study hint at larger implications beyond its scope. Among the more persistent axioms concerning American journalism over the past half-century are: 1) journalists as a professional group are ideologically "left-liberal" and therefore supportive of "diversity," also expressed at various times as "civil rights" or "equal rights" (Gans, 1980, pp.211-12); and 2) the conglomeration of the media is undesirable because it reduces the number of "voices" that can be heard in the "marketplace of ideas," and presents the potential for the influence of the business side on the editorial content (Bagdikian, 1996, pp 4-5). In light of the findings of this study, and other recent ones that sought to answer similar questions, it may be time to reexamine these beliefs.

Will a more market-driven orientation on the part of journalists affect the integrity of their work? Is it be possible that journalists are so imbued with the ethos of their chosen profession that even attempts to co-mingle "church and state" will fail? Can the newspaper thrive as a business and simultaneously fulfill its mission to provide a fresher sense of social responsibility to its newly targeted market? Gans noted that, journalists beliefs notwithstanding, he believed them to hold what he termed "enduring values" (1980, pp. 42-52), a set of eight clusters Gans says are "...sometimes unfairly belittled as 'motherhood values' (p. 42). These "enduring values" include, among others, *responsible capitalism*, a belief that business people will fairly compete for both profits and social wellbeing (pp. 46-48).

It is exactly this kind of approach to market incentives the authors see reflected in the responses of the journalists surveyed. One journalist-respondent summarized the issue as seen by the authors in the following manner. The response is worthy of quoting in full:

> The history of journalism is a tension between the idealism of the profession and the people who have worked in it...and the fact that we are a moneymaking operation. That's always driven what the newspaper is. For example, even the whole idea of objectivity was not commonly seen in American journalism at the turn of the century. The idea that a newspaper could be an objective source of information that citizens could rely on was itself a marketing tool used to build up circulation after years of Yellow Journalism and all that. So, I think there's a dialectic going on here. On the one hand, here there's a huge market that the newspaper has a potential (to reach). The newspaper knows that it has to respond to that for its own survival. Miami realized long ago that it was becoming a Cuban town. (We) are realizing that, too. At the same time, there are a lot of people here who realize that it is the right thing to do anyway. That it's more fair, more open...*because those are values with which Americans were brought up. That was what makes us a good country, that's why we should be proud to be American. We open our arms to everybody. It is both a moral and an economic issue here.*

Researchers involved in this study are presently expanding their efforts to study the impact of diversity on this newspaper. These efforts will entail new surveys in the newsroom and among the newspaper's readership. The findings of these longitudinal studies will compare the perceptions of newspaper reporters and editors with those of community members to help determine whether or not the nature of those perceptions regarding the impact of the diversity effort is shared.

As demographic changes sweep over society and economic changes ripple through the newspaper industry as a result, the authors believe that additional study will be of obvious value, not only of the newspaper at which this study was conducted, but also at newspapers nationwide.

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Newspaper

Improving Newspaper Delivery: A Factor Analysis of Route Demographic Variables and Reliability Measures

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Reliability of newspaper delivery is a serious concern for circulation managers, but media researchers have done little to help them address the issue. This quantitative examination assesses reliability and satisfaction variables for lateness, damage and non-delivery and then correlates those indices with route demographic variables such as carrier age, carrier experience, route length, route density and length of time required for delivery. The results indicate that current industry trends to replace juvenile carriers with "more reliable" adults may be misguided. Age was not correlated with reliable delivery. However, for younger carriers, route length in both time and distance was related to reliability. In addition, newspaper boxes proved to be a valuable tool for improving reliability.

Introduction

For a newspaper reporter sharing a newsroom with part of the circulation staff, it doesn't take long to develop an awareness for the concerns of an often entirely separate aspect of the newspaper business. As reporters and editors, it may be easy to insulate ourselves from the machinations of those whose job it is to deliver our work, but do we sometimes forget that the effectiveness of newspaper and the public's satisfaction with it depend on more than the quality of our writing? The best reporting isn't likely to accomplish much good if it isn't received or isn't timely.

Unfortunately, failed newspaper delivery or other unsatisfactory performance from carriers is not uncommon. Circulation managers spend much of their time dealing with the problems that result from unreliable carrier service, but they haven't received much help in that area from media researchers. The literature has focused on news consumers' dependency on and uses for the media. and to some extent, their reactions to failed delivery. However, an empirical assessment of reliability and satisfaction coupled with a comparison of some variables that may affect those measures is missing. Professionals disagree about whether variables such as carrier age, carrier experience, route length, route density, or the number of customers on the route affect the reliability of newspaper delivery. This paper explores those variables in an attempt to determine which of them are related to delivery reliability, thus providing circulation managers a starting point within the domain of variables over which they exercise some degree of control. Although such relationships, as evidenced by correlations, would not prove a causal link, they could provide a foundation for formative efforts to improve reliability.

Literature Review

Mass communication researchers have long sought to understand media audiences— in part to offer them better service. Since 1937, uses and gratifications theory has asserted that people have very specific goals in mind when they attend to the media. According to the theory, media audiences know what they want, and they will actively seek out products that satisfy these goals.[1]

About a decade after uses and gratifications theory was first explored by the Office of Radio Research at Columbia University, a researcher named Bernard Berelson took a slightly different angle on the concept and examined people's reactions to failed newspaper delivery. New York City's newspaper carriers had been on strike for 17 days, and the city was virtually without paper service when Berelson conducted his study to determine what people miss most about their paper when they can't get it[2]. His surprising results showed such strong reaction among a sample of 60 customers that a new genre of media research was born: dependency theory. As the name suggests, dependency theory indicates a reliance and a need for the media, as compared with a want or desire associated with uses and gratifications theory[3].

About 13 years after Berelson's study, the New York City Newspaper and Mail Deliverers' Union struck again, leaving the city without papers for 19 days. Penn Kimball, a professor of journalism at Columbia University, used the situation to conduct a study following in Berelson's footsteps. He surveyed 164 New Yorkers who "regularly" read a paper, again asking the question: "How much do people miss the newspaper in times of failed delivery?"

Although 13 years had passed since Berelson's study, Kimball found the same strong dependency on newspaper. Qualitative responses included statements such as: "I'm utterly lost." "It's been just awful." "I might as well be in Alaska, I feel so cut off." "Being without newspapers is like being without shoes."

Kimball found this dependency on the newspaper "remarkable" in light of the "tremendous communication apparatus" present in New York City's other media. "News as it is presented in newspapers had a distinct appeal from the news transmitted by other media," he wrote[4].

Beginning in the 1970s. dependency theory received consistently strong attention from media researchers[5]. The body of knowledge has been refined to include an exhaustive set of categories into which all personal and social media uses can be classified[6]. And yes, newspaper is still special to audiences. There is evidence in the dependency literature to suggest that newspaper, in particular, is vital to people's needs to gather information on politics and government[7] and social and self understanding[8].

As could be expected in light of the evidence that newspapers are very important as an information source, recent research following Berelson and Kimball's work suggests that people are still as deeply vexed by failed newspaper delivery as they were 50 years ago. In 1998, Clyde Bentley, a doctoral student at the University of Oregon, had a local newspaper provide him with a daily list of customers who had been missed on the delivery route. He then called these people and asked 10 qualitative survey questions.

Bentley's results suggest that people miss their paper very much when they don't get it. His and other contemporary studies have found newspaper to be such a powerful component of media dependency theory that terms such as "habit" and "ritual" have been used to describe people's reliance[9].

Berelson, Kimball and Bentley have illustrated that missing the newspaper presents a real crisis for media-dependent news consumers. However, they have stopped short of exploring a solution. Because news consumers depend on reliable newspaper delivery, there is good reason to explore ways to provide that service.

Today's media practitioners are increasingly aware of their audience. This is important, because in a time of dwindling readership, newspapers need to work with the audience in mind[10]. Dwight DeWerth-Pallmeyer explains the role audience plays in media decisions as a business influence:

"A marketing perspective in modern news organizations presupposes that audience must be factored into the news production formula. Even for news workers and organizations that are not committed to a marketing orientation, audience is still a key consideration, albeit often tacitly factored into news judgments, technologies and procedures. Perceptions of the audience are part of the overall construction of news"[11].

This sense of obligation to audience can be seen in some of the most basic communication models, which indicate that for communication to take place, a message must go from a sender to a receiver. Various models trace different paths for the message and offer numerous names for the delivery method, including "channel," "translator," "transmitter," "signal," "medium" and "message"[12]. For many newspaper readers, it is the carrier— the colloquial paper boy— who fills that aspect of the communication model.

For a reporter who must field several angry phone calls every morning before the circulation staff arrives, the efficacy of Berelson, Kimball and Bentley's work is clear. It also is obvious that carriers and the reliability of newspaper delivery are good focal points for a study intended as a step beyond dependency theory and into the realm of improving poor delivery reliability.

Most of the circulation concerns being discussed in the literature seem to stem from a contentious debate concerning youth versus adult carriers. Several newspapers, including the *Portland Press Herald, Maine Sunday Telegram, San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner, Belleville Democrat, Toronto Globe* and *Toronto Mail* have eliminated youth carriers or are considering the change[13]. Many cite safety concerns for the youth, but most also offer business reasons for the decision.

Some contend that young carriers are not as reliable as adults[14]. In 1984, the *Toronto Globe* and *Mail* had 3,400 youth carriers who were generating about 4,200 to 4,500 complaints per week. After switching to a streamlined delivery force of adult carriers with longer routes, the papers' 550 to 580 adult carriers produced 932 complaints weekly[15]. Although there were fewer complaints after the switch to adults, the ratio of complaints to carriers increased. It's impossible to know whether the change was attributable to the adults or to the longer routes, but the memory and learning literature would suggest that as the amount of time spent on task without rest increases, so will the frequency of mistakes because of fatigue[16]. It remains to be seen whether this principle extends to newspaper route length and delivery reliability.

Many people seem to believe that adults are more reliable than children. When the

Belleville Democrat replaced its junior carriers with an all-adult delivery force, the first reason for the change was service, said Frank Duke, the paper's marketing director[17]. Similarly, Bentley lists "oversights by juvenile carriers" as a factor in the daily misses he examined in his research. And in his results, he noted that irate customers often "qualified their statements of irritation with comments of understanding for their young newspaper carriers"[18]. No mention was made of adult reliability.

Other practitioners say youth carriers may be more reliable than adults. However, people of this opinion generally add that youth are less efficient than adults.

"The down side of hiring adults," said Jack Butcher, circulation director of the *Tampa Tribune*, "is that while they give more consistent service, it usually is not as good as that provided by youth"[19].

Jack Hertter, circulation manager of the *Bloomington Pantagraph*, said replacing youth with adult carriers means a less-tailored delivery style. "The customer gets a little less service and pays the same price for it," he said[20].

The literature shows disagreement and uncertainty about the reliability of carriers. Is age a factor? Some in the industry suggest that any advantage in adults may be the result of experience.

"Older carriers can also be rewarded with longer routes, as those with experience can probably finish their deliveries more quickly," said Jim Jones, circulation manager of the *Kenosha News* [21]. Jones' assertion would be supported generally by the psychology and learning literature, which suggests that if the factors of massed and distributed practice are equal, task proficiency is directly related to the amount of time spent practicing[22]. However, it remains to be seen whether that relationship extends to newspaper delivery reliability and amount of carrier experience.

Data from the Circulation Research Group indicate that young carriers have fewer customers on their routes than adults. Nearly 90 percent of the youth routes at 25 Northeastern newspapers were composed of fewer than 50 customers. Young carriers also quit their routes more frequently that adults. On an average day, 6 percent of all youth routes were delivered on an emergency basis after the carrier quit without warning, and only about one-third of juvenile carriers kept their routes for one year[23].

These factors of age, experience and turnover are generally believed to have an impact on reliability and customer satisfaction, but there is little empirical evidence to support the connection. As the news media increasingly focus on the marketing aspect of audience concerns, circulation managers must ask what they can do to improve reliability. Kenneth R. Todd, circulation director of the *Indianapolis Star News*, called on papers to "invest more in circulation"[24]. The first step toward that end is to examine the relationships among carrier age, experience, route length, number of customers and reliability of delivery.

H1 Carrier age is negatively correlated with incidents of unreliable delivery. This hypothesis tests the notion that young carriers are not as reliable as adults.

H2 Amount of experience as a carrier is negatively correlated with incidents of unreliable delivery. This hypothesis tests the notion that paper carriers achieve better reliability as they gain experience on the route.

H3 Time spent delivering daily routes is positively correlated with incidents of unreliable delivery. This hypothesis tests the time aspect of the notion that as fatigue mounts, reliability decreases.

H4 Route size, in number of customers, is positively correlated with incidents of unreliable delivery. This hypothesis tests the size aspect of the notion that as fatigue mounts, reliability decreases.

H5 Route length, in kilometers, is positively correlated with incidents of unreliable delivery. This hypothesis tests the distance aspect of the notion that as fatigue mounts, reliability decreases.

H6 Urban route density is positively correlated with incidents of unreliable delivery. This hypothesis is based on excuses given by negligent carriers who suggest that errors are more frequent in highly populated neighborhoods where subscribers are closely mingled with non-subscribers.

H7 Customers with a paper box report better service than those without one. This hypothesis tests the notion that issuing paper tubes (boxes) is a good way to increase service, both through better reliability and decreased damage.

H8 There is a significant difference between delivery reliability of morning and evening routes.

Method

This project involved a factor analysis to identify possible correlations among newspaper circulation reliability variables and delivery route demographic variables. It also used T-tests to measure the significance of differences between circulation reliability variables compared on the basis of morning versus evening delivery and tube versus porch delivery.

Two daily newspapers, one morning and one evening, each with circulations of about 20,000, were selected for this initial study. Both papers were printed and delivered by the same company in the same city. Hopefully, selecting test papers in this way eliminated some of the variance that may have been encountered had the samples been taken from papers published in separate areas.

Route Demographic Variables. A route master report was obtained from the circulation department of each paper. This document is a complete list of all paper routes in the circulation area. It indicates which carrier currently is delivering each route, how many customers are on each route, and the location of each route within the circulation area.

The number of routes shown on the route master report was misleading because a single carrier often has two, three or even more routes. The carrier, of course, treats the multiple routes as one. Another problem occurred when carriers had other people helping them with routes. In some instances, a carrier would take half the papers and go one way to deliver while a friend or relative took the rest and delivered in another part of town.

Pending telephone confirmation, multiple routes held by the same carrier were lumped together to represent what they really were: one, big route. Likewise, if a carrier delivered only half the papers indicated on the route master report, the appropriate correction was made.

When both of these problems were corrected and an accurate picture of the route sizes and carriers was established, a stratified sample of carriers was selected based on location and the number of customers comprising routes.

After the routes necessary to construct a stratified sample were identified, the carriers holding those routes were contacted by telephone. Each carrier first was asked to confirm the number of customers along the route. The number sometimes was different from the number indicated on the route master report because carriers continually acquire or lose subscribers. It takes time for these changes to be reflected in the route master report.

Five information variables were collected from each carrier during the telephone interview. The carriers were asked: 1) how many customers comprised their weekday routes, 2) how long it took them to deliver their routes on an average day, 3) the length of the route in kilometers, 4) how many months they had held the routes, and 5) their ages in years. A sixth variable was calculated by dividing the number of customers on each route by its length in kilometers. This variable, labeled "density," was meant to quantify the urban or rural quality of each route and measure changes in relation to that characteristic. Some country routes were long and spread out while city routes often were short and dense.

Reliability Variables. After these six variables were collected from the carriers, another report, called a customer list, was obtained from the circulation department. The customer list contains the name, address and phone number of every customer on each route. It also indicates each customer's subscription type (seven-day, six-day, five-day, weekend-only or Sunday-only). Weekend and Sunday-only customers were eliminated from the lists because it was not valid to compare them with customers who received the paper all week. Only customer lists for the routes selected in the stratified sample of routes were obtained.

Households were selected randomly from the customer list of each sampled route and contacted for a telephone survey. Each route was considered separately. That is, a phone survey was conducted for each route, and the results were paired with that route's demographic variables (the information collected from the carriers).

The number of households surveyed along each route varied to match the route size. For routes consisting of fewer than 100 subscribers, survey responses were collected from 10 people. This method allowed the percent sampled to increase for smaller routes, which demand a larger sampling percentage to ensure a valid measure. Using this method, a full 50 percent of the households would be surveyed from a route containing 20 customers, while a smaller proportion— about 17 percent— would be sampled from a route of 60 subscribers. For routes composed of more than 100 subscribers, a sampling quota of 10 percent was collected. Using this method, a large route of 320 customers would be represented by 32 respondents. This seemed to be the most reasonable method to collect samples for comparison of populations varying in size from 11 to more than 400.

These questions were asked during the phone interviews with customers:

1) How many times in the last two months has your newspaper been delivered more than three hours late?

2) How many times in the last two months has your newspaper been delivered to you damaged, like being wet or torn?

3) How many times in the last two months has your newspaper not been delivered at all on a given day?

For each of the above questions, those respondents reporting incidents of lateness, damage or non-delivery also were asked to quantify their satisfaction with the respective performances using a 10-point Likert scale.

Lateness, damage and non-delivery were assessed for the last two months because that was the shortest period any of the sampled carriers had been with the newspaper. To ask respondents to report performance for a longer period, say the last six months, would have compromised validity if their carrier had been on the route for only three months.

The data were processed by calculating item means for the incidents of lateness, damage and non-delivery as well as for the respective Likert-scale satisfaction responses. These means were calculated on a route-by-route basis, with each route producing item means for the six reliability questions.

Comparing the variables. For the factor analysis, the six demographic variables collected from the carriers were correlated by route using Pearson's r with the item means of the six circulation variables collected from the customers. This was done to search for patterns among variables such as route size, density and carrier age and incidents of lateness, damage and non-delivery of the newspaper.

Finally, subscribers were asked if they had a paper box. This yes/no question was posed to determine whether people with paper boxes receive more reliable delivery than those who don't have a box. Incidents of lateness, damage and non-delivery reported by box customers were separated from the responses of those without boxes. T-tests were used to determine whether there were significant differences between these two groups.

The same type of significance testing was performed with the data using morning or evening delivery as the distinction. T-tests were used to compare lateness, damage, non-delivery and respective satisfaction ratings from morning and evening customers.

Results

A total of 722 subscribers were interviewed along 54 newspaper routes. On average, subscribers reported .625 incidents of late delivery (more than three hours late) in the last two months. Respondents also reported .725 incidents of damage and .359 incidents of non-delivery (no paper at all). Using a zero-to-10 Likert scale, mean satisfaction ratings for the degree of lateness, damage and non-delivery were 9.25, 9.33 and 9.23 respectively.

Hypothesis 1 was not supported. Age was not significantly correlated with reliability. As predicted, the correlation coefficients for lateness, damage and non-delivery were negatively associated with carrier age. But at -.245, -.215 and -.202, respectively, they were not significant at the 95-percent confidence interval ($p = .07$, .12 and .14).

Hypothesis 2 was not supported. Amount of experience as a carrier was not significantly correlated with reliability. Again, the associations were in the direction predicted by the hypothesis, but they were too weak to consider real.

As is illustrated in hypothesis 1, age was not correlated with reliability. However, age was strongly correlated with several other measures, including number of customers, route length in minutes and kilometers, and route density (table 1). What that means is that older carriers had larger routes that contained more customers, took more time to deliver, were spread out over longer distances and were more rural. Therefore, comparing route length, number of customers and route density with reliability was, in effect, again comparing age with reliability. To control the variance introduced by the age factor, the data were divided into adult (18 and older) and juvenile (17 and younger) age groups. The correlations for hypotheses 3, 4, 5 and 6 then were calculated using both the original and the age-sorted data sets. There were 23 youth routes and 31 adult routes.

Hypothesis 3 was supported in the youth routes but unsupported in the adult routes. For juvenile carriers, route length in minutes was positively correlated with incidents of non-delivery ($r = .529$ $p = .01$). No similar effects were observed in adult routes or in the unsorted data.

Hypothesis 4 was not supported. Route size in number of customers was not related with reliability.

Hypothesis 5 was supported in the youth routes but unsupported in the adult routes. For juvenile carriers, route length in kilometers was positively correlated with incidents of non-delivery ($r = .443$ $p = .04$). No similar effects were observed in adult routes or in the unsorted data.

Hypothesis 6 was not supported. Route density (number of customers divided by length in kilometers) was not related with reliability.

Hypothesis 7 was supported. Customers with a paper box reported significantly fewer incidents of lateness, damage and non-delivery than did customers without a box (box $X = .30$, porch $X = .64$ $t = 3.26$ $p = .01$; box $X = .47$, porch $X = .79$ $t = 2.47$ $p = .01$; box $X = .22$, porch $X = .36$ $t = 2.02$ $p = .04$).

Hypothesis 8 was supported. Morning customers reported significantly fewer incidents of lateness and damage than evening customers (morning $X = .34$, evening $X = .60$ $t = 2.50$ $p = .01$; morning $X = .44$, evening $X = .80$ $t = 2.98$ $p = .003$). Morning and evening deliveries were not significantly different when compared by incidents of non-delivery (morning $X = .28$, evening $X = .31$ $t = .441$).

Conclusion

For circulation managers seeking to improve delivery reliability, this research suggests that the current trend of eliminating juvenile carriers in favor of adults probably is a mistake. Age was not significantly related with reliability. There were some amazingly fastidious carriers of all ages. as well as some downright lousy ones.

However, the examination of age did reveal that some good can be accomplished by keeping youth routes short. To maximize reliability. circulation managers should not assign long-distance or very time-consuming routes to their younger carriers. Among carriers 17 and younger, incidents of non-delivery increased with time and distance of the routes. Adult carriers showed no such susceptibility to time or distance, so circulation managers should assign them the longest routes.

However, a route with a lot of customers is not necessarily a poor choice for a young carrier. Even among the youth-route data set, number of customers was not related to reliability. Remember that route length in minutes and kilometers was, however, related to reliability.

A factor that did not seem to affect performance for carriers of any age was the density of their routes. No matter whether the routes were highly compressed in the city, long and spread out in the country, reliability and density were unrelated.

However, as practical wisdom might suggest, issuing a newspaper box was a great way to improve reliability. The 290 customers with boxes reported much lower rates of damage and non-delivery than the 434 customers without them. Those results dovetail with what one would expect a paper box to do. Boxes appear to protect against weather damage and seem to give carriers a visual cue that reduces non-delivery "misses." The advantages in decreased damage and non-delivery were so significant that circulation managers should be encouraged to issue a box to every customer who will accept one.

Although no data were collected to measure their impact, polyethylene bags also seem to be remarkably effective in reducing damage, at least in the eyes of respondents offering qualitative remarks about reliability.

Finally, circulation managers should know that this research found no relationship between experience as a carrier and reliability. The results found here in Hypothesis 2 suggest there is no reason to expect that a newspaper carrier who has held a route for several years will be any more reliable than one who started last month, regardless of age. More than any other finding, that result perhaps cuts to the quick of what this research shows: Reliable delivery seems to be more strongly related to the work ethic of the carrier than many demographic qualities of either the carriers or their routes. Perhaps good carriers are earmarked by traits such as responsibility. To be sure, they come in all ages and deliver all types of newspaper routes.

Other Findings. As with Berelson, Kimball and Bentley's strictly qualitative examinations of failed delivery, this mostly quantitative study of the issue also revealed information in people's open-ended comments. Among the other findings of interest are these observations:

- People were generally very aware of why their paper may have been late or not delivered at all (carrier's fault, press malfunction, etc.) They often were more certain of the reasons why than of the precise number of incidents that had occurred.
- The majority of newspaper subscribers surveyed were older than middle-aged, and they were much more forgiving of poor service than younger subscribers. Young customers were in the minority, but they were much less tolerant of unreliable delivery.
- Subscribers were more tolerant of lateness and damage than they were of non-delivery. As long as the paper was delivered the same day it was published, most people weren't too upset. But not getting one at all angered many people. Tardiness and damage may be forgivable, but very few customers were tolerant of non-delivery.

TABLE 1

Factor Analysis of Route Demographic Variables and Reliability Measures

	Damage	Dam. Sat.	Late	Late Sat.	Miss	Miss Sat.	Age	Number	Minutes	Kilo	Months	Density
Age	-.215	.253	-.245	.305*	-.202	.159	1.00					
Number	-.139	.199	-.233	.235	-.162	.177	.569**	1.00				
Minutes	-.055	.096	-.230	.239	-.077	.039	.693**	.770**	1.00			
Kilo	.004	-.009	-.195	.160	-.052	-.044	.519**	.599**	.748**	1.00		
Months	-.166	.207	-.093	.131	-.132	.127	.392**	.301*	.361**	.195	1.00	
Density	-.040	.006	.029	-.080	-.141	.162	-.568**	-.475**	-.554**	-.554**	-.180	1.00
Damage	1.00	-.907**	.495**	-.537**	.706**	-.713**						
Dam. Sat.		1.00	-.474**	.467**	-.640**	.668**						
Late			1.00	-.903**	.714**	-.619**						
Late Sat.				1.00	-.616**	.600**						
Miss					1.00	-.910**						
Miss Sat.						1.00						

* p< .05   ** p< .01

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Paper submitted for consideration
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Running Head: The Shrinking Sphere of Privacy

The Shrinking Sphere of Privacy:
Candidate Coverage in Presidential Politics, 1980 to 1996

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Abstract

Politicians bemoan the personal nature of campaign coverage, saying it distracts voters and keeps good people from running for office. Others argue that a candidate's handling of media scrutiny prepares him or her for the limelight of office. This study finds that campaign coverage today is more personal than in 1980, although it is not more negative. It also finds that while most personal coverage is about Democrats, personal coverage of Republican candidates is more negative.

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Introduction

In the 1996 election, voters learned, among other things, that Republican candidate Bob Dole had a warm, personal relationship with former Democratic Party chairman Robert Strauss. In 1992, voters were told about Democratic candidate Jerry Brown's unhappy relationship with his father, Reform Party candidate Ross Perot's less-than-stellar class ranking when he was a student at the Naval Academy, and Democratic candidate Bill Clinton's alleged affair with Gennifer Flowers. In 1988, reports that Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis had been treated by a psychiatrist -- reports that weren't true -- nearly derailed his candidacy.

Similar stories about other candidates can be found in campaign coverage dating back to the previous century when Grover Cleveland, in 1884, had to face allegations that he had fathered an illegitimate child, and Thomas Jefferson, in 1802, was accused of having a slave as a mistress (Renshon, 1992).

It all makes for interesting copy, and it may even sell a few newspapers, but does this kind of personal information inform voters? Does it help them make choices among candidates? Does it reflect well on the media? And just how much of it is there, anyway?

Theory

Clearly voters are interested in personal information about candidates -- information that might not show up on a resume or would not be part of the candidate's professional background. Election year studies conducted by the University of Michigan have shown that candidate characteristics such as honesty, integrity, competence and leadership are increasingly important to voters (Renshon, 1992). But at the same time, voters report a distaste for knowing about politicians' private lives, even though they will also admit that it influences their decisions. Renshon (1992, p. 571) quotes, as an example, the following excerpt from a 1987 story on the *MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour* about Gary Hart's presidential bid, which was virtually ended when reports came out that he had been having an affair with Donna Rice:

Woman:	Well, I think his private life is his own business.
Interviewer:	It wouldn't affect whether or not you would vote for him?
Woman:	Yeah, it makes a big difference to me.
Interviewer:	His private life does?
Woman:	Yes.
Interviewer:	Should the press report on his private life?
Woman:	No.
Interviewer:	How are you going to know about it?
Woman:	I would have felt better if I didn't know about it.
Interviewer:	You don't want to know?
Woman:	No, I don't.
Interviewer:	But it does affect the way you vote, right?
Woman:	It certainly does.

Graber (1993) says that voters won't pay attention to election information unless it's made interesting and relevant to them, and what voters say is interesting and relevant is information about candidate's personalities, experiences and issue positions. They are less interested in coverage of the candidate on the stump, polling results, or gossip and speculation (Graber, 1993). But to grab a voter's interest, election stories must be dramatic and exciting.

What are most dramatic are events that deviate from the social norms, particularly those that involve conflict or controversy, sensationalism, or the odd or unusual (Shoemaker, Danielian & Brendlinger, 1991). The authors say that attention to the media is greatest when media content differs from what the individual expects and that evidence collected by psychologists shows that people have "an innate interest in deviance" (Shoemaker, Danielian & Brendlinger, 1991, p. 784). While their study focuses on coverage of foreign news, they note that as the level of deviance increases, there is greater media coverage and it is played more prominently (Shoemaker, Danielian & Brendlinger, 1991).

The fact that readers pay attention to personal coverage of candidates is partly what keeps it on the front pages. Television ratings and newspaper market shares are important to those in the business side of journalism, and the fact that people are attentive to personal information means they're likely to get more of it (Payne & Mercuri, 1993). The business of journalism is one of the three factors that Bennett (1996) cites as a journalistic norm that influences what gets into the news. Competing with that norm are professional norms of objectivity and fairness, and the norm of the role of the press in politics, which includes the duty to inform citizens about their elected officials and candidates for office and to hold them accountable for their actions (Bennett, 1996). Stories, therefore, have frequently focused on conflicts between elected officials and, in election settings, horse race stories and " 'war room' stories that portray candidates and campaigns as driven by the daily battle for voter approval at seemingly any cost" (Bennett, 1996, p. 378). Increasingly, however, a greater focus on the profitability of a news organization has shifted coverage more towards entertaining readers and viewers at the expense of issue coverage (Graber, 1993; Bennett, 1996). The result is that character stories and personal scandals are "emphasized and dramatized well beyond their arguable political significance" because they are less complex and more entertaining than issue-oriented stories (Bennett, 1996, p. 381). The problem, however, is that the audience is somewhat uncomfortable with the coverage and journalists feel short-changed.

Business concerns are not the only factors driving the increased emphasis on personal coverage, however. Other reasons for the shift away from issues and to candidate-centered coverage are that the libel laws now make it more difficult for public officials to win a libel claim, and that the media, partly as a result of being criticized for shielding past presidents (including Franklin Delano Roosevelt and John Kennedy), are less willing to respect a candidate's or politician's secrets (Fiedler, 1992; Dobel, 1998). Long gone are the days when a candidate such as Wendell Wilkie, who ran for the presidency in 1940, could hold a press conference in his mistress' apartment (Renshon, 1992). Reporters also developed a greater distrust of politicians, especially during the Johnson administration when they were not provided with accurate information about the Vietnam War, and later during the Nixon administration with the Watergate scandal. Fiedler, a political editor with the *Miami Herald*, says journalists now see their job as being to challenge the packaging done by a candidate seeking office, to strip away the image and get at the truth behind the candidate's facade (1992).

But a critical factor in the shift to a greater focus on candidates' personal lives has been the declining influence of the political party system (Fiedler, 1992; Dobel, 1998). As recently as 1968, Hubert Humphrey was picked as the Democratic nominee for the presidency, despite the fact that he hadn't run in a single primary. His selection was the result of deals made by party bosses, who screened the candidates and found the one they thought best represented the party's ideology and who had the best chance of winning a general election (Fiedler, 1992). By 1972, when George McGovern was the Democratic nominee, party reform movements had so reduced the influence of party bosses that McGovern came to the convention with a string of primary victories and enough momentum to win the nomination. Candidates now know that winning the primaries is the path to their party's nomination, and winning the primaries means courting the press. It also means using the press to plant stories that will discredit the competition, and candidates and interest groups play to the relaxed media standards regarding reporting about a politician's personal life (Dobel, 1988). The growing influence of television also has contributed to the shift toward candidate-centered coverage. Television, with its need for video images, is much more likely to look to candidates for news than to issues (Fiedler, 1992).

Still, the fact that voters pay attention to personal coverage of candidates, and perhaps that they even like it on some level, does not mean that it informs them or helps them make choices among candidates. Decades of research has shown that voters learn about the candidates and their campaigns from the media and that more media exposure is related to greater levels of knowledge about the campaign (Kaid, 1996). Media coverage of a candidate can be divided into five phases: announcement, definition, debunking, judgment and conversion (Payne & Mercuri, 1993). In the initial phases, as the candidate announces his or her intention to run and as he or she begins to discuss specific issue positions, the coverage tends to be more positive. Later, as the candidate is more well known, either the public or the press will ask questions about the individual's behavior, character, or a questionable issue position. This is known as the debunking phase (Payne & Mercuri, 1993). The judgment phase begins as the candidate responds to the concerns raised in the debunking phase, and those candidates who are successful in the judgment phase come through the conversion phase to a renewed legitimacy (Payne & Mercuri, 1993). This scrutiny, which Fiedler calls "the test of white-hot heat" allows those who survive it to come through "cleaner and stronger for it, like fired and tempered steel" (Fiedler, 1992). Clinton was one of the those who survived the heat in 1992 and went on to capture not only his party's nomination, but the presidency. Payne and Mercuri say this is because Clinton, unlike Gary Hart in 1987, went directly to the people, via *60 Minutes*, to plead his case in the Gennifer Flowers matter. Also, the original source of the Gennifer Flowers allegations was the *Star*, a tabloid newspaper, rather than the *Miami Herald*, which broke the Gary Hart story. Finally, Hillary Clinton was immediately at Bill Clinton's side when the Gennifer Flowers story broke, but when the Donna Rice story broke, Lee Hart was conspicuously absent (Payne & Mercuri, 1993).

For voters, there were messages in the way the two candidates -- Hart in 1987 and Clinton in 1992 -- handled the scandals. The messages contained cues about the character of each candidate, something that political scholars say is important for voters to know and something that helps them make choices from among candidates, especially in the primaries when there are no party cues to help distinguish one candidate from another. While there is disagreement among scholars -- and among journalists and voters -- about how much personal coverage is appropriate, there does seem to be agreement that some amount of personal coverage helps voters learn about the quality of the candidates. This is important because while position statements and issue papers can tell a voter what a candidate says he or she will do, position statements can't anticipate every situation that will occur during a president's term in office. Character is important, therefore, because it is related to a candidate's ability to govern effectively (Fiedler, 1992; Ramsden, 1996). Fiedler says that voters are looking for candidates who can deal with situations that neither they nor the candidates can yet envision, and that in determining who is the best person for office, it often is more important to know whether the candidate is an adulterer or a liar or a war hero than it is to know his or her position on a given issue (1992).

Others say that some private information is not only legitimate for voters to know about, it's important for them to know. This includes information about a candidate's overall health as it relates to his or her ability to serve; information about misdeeds that become part of the public record through an arrest or civil trial; information about his or her sex life if it involves a staff member, a minor, or if it is compulsive; and information about ongoing alcohol or drug abuse, or the condoning of drug abuse (Sabato, 1991). To these, Renshon would add personal and interpersonal integrity, policy understanding and judgment, and leadership capacity and skills, which he says are grounded in "a capacity for effectiveness, a consolidated sense of personal and political identity, well-developed standards of personal and interpersonal integrity, and good personal and interpersonal judgment" (1992, p. 583). Candidates have a social contract with the voters, and to the degree that they falsify or manipulate their own records and images, they violate that contract (Renshon, 1992).

What doesn't belong, Sabato (1991) argues, are stories about the problems of a candidate's minor children; coverage of extra-marital affairs if they're discreet and don't involve staff members or children; and drug and/or alcohol abuse that occurred at least a decade prior to the candidate's running for office. While the private lives of candidates were of interest to voters in earlier eras, stories about scandal then were primarily linked to politics and partisanship. For contemporary voters, there is a stronger link between character assessments and a candidate's suitability for office (Renshon, 1992). Still, while reporting about candidates' private lives appears to be increasing, neither the public nor the press seems to be especially happy about it. And to the public, it's the media's fault.

Consider the results of a July 1998 poll of Americans conducted by Princeton Research Survey Associates for *Newsweek* magazine. The study, Princeton Research's first on media credibility since 1985, shows that 76 percent of the respondents believe the media have "gone too far in the direction of entertainment and away from traditional reporting" (Nicholson, 1998, p. 8). And reporters today, according to the respondents, are more likely to be influenced by competitive pressure to get a story (71 percent), pressure from media owners for profits (77 percent), and a desire on the part of the reporter to make money and gain fame (70 percent) (Nicholson, 1988, p. 8). Additional polls show that 68 percent of Americans don't think that reporters respect the privacy of public officials (ABC News, 1997), and 64 percent think that the increased attention on the private lives of public officials is bad for the country (Princeton Survey Research Associates, 1998).

Even journalists think it brings out the seamy side of the profession. In an analysis of the media's coverage of itself during the 1992 presidential campaign, half of the stories that rated the media's performance gave the media negative reviews (Johnson, Boudreau & Glowaki, 1996). The media got especially poor marks -- mostly from journalists, rather than from outside observers -- for their coverage of the Gennifer Flowers story, and the

New York press was chastised for its focus during Clinton's New York campaign on allegations that Clinton evaded the draft, tried (but didn't inhale) marijuana, and played golf at an all-white country club (Johnson, Boudreau & Glowaki, 1996).

And scholars and journalists think that the focus on candidate's personal lives and character flaws is bad for the political process. Coverage of candidates' private lives can detract from real issues (Dobel, 1998) and the fear of having their private lives become campaign fodder keeps some potential candidates from entering a race at all (Fiedler, 1992; Dobel, 1998). For example, the focus on character issues and private lives was one reason that former U.S. Rep. Patricia Schroeder, D-Colo., decided not to run for the presidency in 1988 (Fiedler, 1992).

Hypotheses

Still, in all the discussion of the coverage of private lives of public figures, very little has been done to look at how much there is and how it has changed over time. While there is plenty of anecdotal evidence to suggests the amount of personal coverage has increased, this paper proposes two hypotheses to examine both the amount and nature of the coverage of candidates' personal lives.

H1: The amount of reporting about presidential candidates' personal lives has increased over time.

H2: The valence of personal coverage -- that is, whether it is positive, neutral or negative -- has become increasingly negative over time.

Methodology

This study examines coverage of candidates in the *Washington Post* in presidential elections from 1980 through 1996. The *Post* was selected since it is considered to be a paper of record for national events and is counted among the elite media, especially with respect to political coverage. The study measures not only the amount of personal coverage of the candidates, but also the valence of that coverage -- whether it is positive, neutral or negative -- in terms of how it reflects on the candidate.

For this study, personal information is considered to be any information that does not relate to the candidate's professional background. This includes information about his family, his personal finances, his habits or his personal characteristics. For example, references to Steve Forbes' personal fortune during the 1996 campaign are considered personal for the purposes of this study. Likewise, references to Ross Perot in the 1992 campaign as "impatient, ambitious" (Von Drehle, 1992) when he was in the Navy are coded as personal since they are characteristics of the candidate and not items that reflect on his credentials to be president.

Additionally, references to Forbes' wealth or Perot's impatience are considered to reflect negatively on the candidates. In the case of Forbes, his wealth was often portrayed as something that gave him an unfair advantage over other candidates. Perot's impatience also was portrayed as something that detracted from his character. References to Perot as "proud and confident" (Von Drehle, 1992) in the same story are coded as positive. Personal references that are merely factual, such as the fact that Bill Clinton is married and has a daughter, are considered neutral. Also considered neutral are references that contain both positive and negative information, such as a reference to Perot that describes him as "brilliant yet hardheaded" (Von Drehle, 1992).

Sampling:

Using random sampling methods, 20 dates were selected out of each of the election years being studied. The months of November and December were excluded from the study to avoid selecting dates that fell after the election. The dates used in this analysis are January 13 and 22; February 6; March 4 and 6; April 11 and 30; May 23 and 31; June 16 and 27; July 5, 11, 17 and 29; August 3, 14 and 22; September 3; and October 24 for each of the five years being studied. These dates, although randomly selected, do include stories during the primaries, the national conventions and the closing days of the campaign.

Stories that appeared on the front page of the *Washington Post* were gathered from the Nexis database using several terms, including the candidates' names and the terms "republican" and "democrat" to turn up candidates who may not have been major players in the election.

Coding:

Since multiple candidates are mentioned in most of the stories, stories were coded at the paragraph level and the paragraphs became the unit of analysis for this study. Before the stories were coded for analysis, a systematic sample of paragraphs was drawn using a random starting point. This sample of paragraphs were coded independently by two separate coders on the following items:

Item 1	Does the paragraph contain personal information about a candidate?
Item 2	If yes to Item 1, is the personal information about a Democrat, a Republican, both, or other?
Item 3	If yes to Item 1, does the personal information reflect positively, negatively or neutrally on the candidate?

All paragraphs were coded for the presence of personal information. For those with personal information, additional coding was done to determine the partisanship of the candidate who was the subject of the personal mention and to determine whether the personal information cast the candidate in a positive, neutral or negative light. The results for intercoder reliability, using Scott's pi, are:

Paragraph contains personal information = .94

Partisanship of candidate mentioned	=	1.0
Valence of personal information	=	.80

A total of 4,054 paragraphs were coded and analyzed to test the first hypothesis -- that the amount of personal coverage of candidates has increased over time. However, only those paragraphs that contained personal information were used for the subsequent tests, which reduced the number to 754.

Results

Over the entire sample, about 19 percent of the paragraphs contained personal information about a candidate or candidates (Table 1). In most of the cases, the personal information was about a Democrat (44.3 percent), rather than a Republican (39.8 percent) or other (13.5 percent). Stories about Ross Perot, who ran both in 1992 and 1996, as well as the strong independent candidacy of John Anderson in 1980, account for the high percentage of stories about other candidates in the time period covered by this research.

Overall, the personal paragraphs were more negative than positive, 44.7 percent compared to 21.1 percent, but 34.2 percent of them were neutral (Table 1). There was a fair distribution of paragraphs across the five years studied, although the proportions were a little lower for 1988 and 1996 than for the other years. Distribution within a year was more heavily weighted to July and August (most likely because of the conventions) and March (probably due to the primaries).

Examining the amount of personal coverage by year shows that the amount of personal coverage of candidates has increased since 1980, although not in a consistent manner (Table 2). In 1980, only 11.7 percent of the paragraphs contained personal information; by 1996, that percentage had climbed to 17.7 percent. However, there was much more personal coverage of candidates in 1992 (27.4 percent) than in 1996 (17.7 percent). Still, the overall trend toward more personal coverage is clearly demonstrated, with a X^2 of 78.75 (Cramer's V=.14, p <.001). The Kendall's correlation between the amount of personal coverage and the year in which the story ran is .07 ($p < .001$), again demonstrating that the election coverage in the earlier years contained less personal reporting than more recent coverage (Table 8). However, the correlation is not especially strong since the pattern of personal coverage does not rise in a steady fashion.

The analysis of personal coverage also shows a significant relationship between the time of year the paragraph appeared and the amount of personal coverage. In this case, the earlier in the election year that the information appears, the more likely it is that it will be personal. Of the paragraphs appearing in winter (the months of January and February), 33.7 percent contained personal information, whereas only 9.6 percent of the paragraphs appearing in the September and October, the fall months, did (Table 3). The highest amount of personal coverage appeared in the winter, when candidates were just becoming known to the voters and reporters were focusing in on the candidates who were most viable and were preparing profiles and other background stories in advance of the national conventions held by the political parties. Personal coverage in the spring (March, April and May) and summer (June, July and August) months is lower, and by fall it drops off considerably, presumably because voters already are well aware of the candidates' backgrounds. The amount of personal coverage compared to the season in which the paragraphs appeared had a X^2 of 119.28 (Cramer's $V=.17$, $p < .001$). The Kendall's correlation for the two variables was -.11, ($p < .001$) (Table 8).

The second hypothesis, that the valence of the coverage would become increasingly negative over time, also was supported by the data. Again, although the pattern of negative coverage does not show a consistent rise -- 1988 was more negative than 1984 or 1992 -- there is, over time, a dramatic increase of more than 15 percent in the amount of negative and personal reporting between 1980 and 1996 (Table 4). Most of the shift to negative reporting came from neutral reporting, which dropped more than 10 percent between 1980 and 1996. While there are shifts from one election to the next, the data reveal a significant relationship between the year of the coverage and the amount of negative personal coverage, with a X^2 of 17.50 (Cramer's V=.11, p <.05) (Table 4).

There is an observed, but nearly statistically significant (p=.07) relationship between the season in which the information appeared and the valence of the information. The data show that there tended to be more negative paragraphs in the fall than in the other three seasons, and that the least amount of negative information appeared in the winter (Table 5). As was the case in looking at negative reporting by election year, however, the increase in negative reporting later in the election season appears to come at the expense of neutral reporting, which dips by more than 18 percent between winter and fall. However, this data needs to be interpreted with caution since it did not reach statistical significance.

Additional analysis of the data turned up an interesting finding, which was not hypothesized, regarding partisanship and the valence of personal coverage. There is a small negative correlation (-.15, p <.001) between a candidate's political party and the valence of the coverage he or she receives (Table 8), such that coverage about Republicans is likely to be more negative than coverage about Democrats. This is borne out by a breakdown of the valence by party (Table 6), which shows that of the paragraphs about Republicans that contained personal information, 55.3 percent contained negative information. For Democrats the figure was only 40.1 percent and for independents (Perot and Anderson) it was 27.5 percent. Republicans also were the least likely to have any positive personal information appear in campaign coverage. Only 17.3 percent of the personal coverage about Republicans was positive, whereas 24.0 percent of personal coverage about Democrats and 24.5 percent of personal coverage about independents was positive. However, the relationship, while statistically significant (p <.001), was small, with a X^2 of only 29.96 (Cramer's V=.14).

Another interesting finding that turned up in the data was that when comparing the two major political parties, coverage of personal information about Democrats was higher in the winter, with 55.1 percent of the personal coverage in the winter focusing on

Democrats (Table 7). However by fall, when the coverage was more negative, the numbers had almost reversed, with 56.6 percent of the personal coverage being about Republicans.

Discussion

Since the late 1940s, when Robert Hutchins reported on the work of the Commission on the Freedom of the Press, one of the guiding principles for the media has been the notion of social responsibility (McQuail, 1994). The Commission's report criticized the media for their focus on sensationalism and developed a list of standards that it believed the media should practice. Among those standards was the charge that "the news media should be truthful, accurate, fair, objective and *relevant* (emphasis added)" (McQuail, 1994, p. 124). At the heart of the Commission's report was the notion that media ownership was a public trust, not merely a business like selling shoes (McQuail, 1994).

Following on the Commission's work, the United Nations, through UNESCO, developed a more thorough set of standards called the International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism (McQuail, 1994). Not only does this code of ethics call for journalists to operate under a sense of social responsibility, it also calls for them to have "respect for privacy and human dignity" (McQuail, 1994, p. 125). And when it calls for journalists to have "respect for the public interest," it defines the term as "respect for the 'national community, its democratic institutions and public morals' " (McQuail, 1994, p. 125).

McQuail (1994, p. 135) himself says that normative theory today still recognizes the concept that the media should serve the public good:

> This means, in practice, that mass media are not the same as any other business or service industry, but often carry out some tasks which contribute to the wider and longer-term benefit of society as a whole, especially in cultural and political matters, over and above their own ostensible organizational goals.

The data presented here, especially in light of the connections between personal reporting and the business norms of journalism (Bennett, 1996) raise questions about just how much of a social responsibility function the press still serves. However, there is a function to be served by reporting about candidates' personal lives in a campaign since a candidate's mettle can be measured through his or her ability to withstand the "white-hot" glare of media coverage. Viewed under that light, the media is turning up the heat on candidates because personal coverage is increasing.

It is also worth noting that as personal coverage is increasing, there is also support for the hypothesis that the coverage itself has gotten increasingly negative, consistent with the general agreement that campaigns and elections have gotten more negative. Still, it's interesting to note that while Democrats received more of the personal coverage between 1980 and 1996, the personal coverage of Republicans was more negative.

The danger, as others have pointed out, is that candidate-centered coverage may begin to crowd out issue coverage (Bennett, 1996; Dobel, 1998). Future research should investigate this by looking at the amount of personal coverage not only as it compares to the total amount of coverage, but also as it compares to the amount of coverage given to issues, rather than polls and campaign events.

Additionally, future research should look more closely at coverage and valence differences between candidates from the various political parties. Doing that will require expanding the study beyond the scope of this research and including more stories so that the study can incorporate interval and ratio level variables. Still, the information presented here provides a good starting point and makes a strong case for the perception that campaign coverage has gotten increasingly personal and increasingly negative.

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Table 1. Percentages for amount of personal coverage of presidential candidates in *The Washington Post*, valence and partisanship of those covered

Variables	Percentage
Does the paragraph contain personal information about a presidential candidate?	
No	81.4
Yes	18.6
	100.0%
	(N = 4054)
If the paragraph does contain personal information, what is the partisanship of person being reported on in the paragraph?	
Republican	39.8
Democrat	44.3
Both	2.4
Other	13.5
	100.0%
	(N = 754)
If the paragraph does contain personal information, is the information positive, neutral or negative as it reflects on the candidate?	
Positive	21.1
Neutral	34.2
Negative	44.7
	100.0%
	(N = 754)
Year in which the paragraph appeared:	
1980	23.0
1984	24.0
1988	15.6
1992	21.5
1996	15.9
	100.0%
	(N = 4054)
Month in which the paragraph appeared:	
January	8.7
February	4.9
March	14.1
April	2.3
May	2.8
June	7.9
July	22.0
August	22.9
September	8.0
October	6.4
	100.0%
	(N = 4054)

Table 2. Crosstabulation of whether the story contained personal information by the year in which the story appeared

Did the paragraph contain personal information?	Year 1980	1984	1988	1992	1996
No	88.3	80.2	84.3	72.6	82.3
Yes	11.7	19.8	15.7	27.4	17.7
	100.0% (N=931)	100.0% (N=973)	100.0% (N=632)	100.0% (N=873)	100.0% (N=645)

$X^2 = 78.57$, df = 4, $p < .001$
Cramer's V = .14

Table 3. Crosstabulation of whether the story contained personal information by the season in which the story appeared

Did the paragraph contain personal information?	Season Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall
No	66.3	84.6	81.7	90.4
Yes	33.7	15.4	18.3	9.6
	100.0% (N=552)	100.0% (N=779)	100.0% (N=2142)	100.0% (N=581)

$X^2 = 119.28$, df = 3, $p < .001$
Cramer's V = .17

Table 4. Crosstabulation of valence of the personal information by the year in which the story appeared, for stories with personal information only

Valence of personal information	Year 1980	1984	1988	1992	1996
Positive	22.9	18.7	30.3	29.6	18.4
Neutral	40.4	38.3	20.2	33.3	29.8
Negative	36.7	43.0	49.5	44.4	51.8
	100.0% (N=109)	100.0% (N=193)	100.0% (N=99)	100.0% (N=239)	100.0% (N=114)

$X^2 = 17.50$, df = 8, $p < .05$
Cramer's V = .11

Table 5. Crosstabulation of valence of the personal information by the season in which the story appeared, for stories with personal information only

Valence of personal information?	Season: Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall
Positive	20.4	20.8	21.4	21.4
Neutral	43.5	30.8	32.1	25.0
Negative	36.0	48.3	46.4	53.6
	100.0% (N=186)	100.0% (N=120)	100.0% (N=392)	100.0% (N=56)

$X^2 = 11.82$, df = 6, p = ns (.07)
Cramer's V = .09

Table 6. Crosstabulation of valence of the personal information by the partisanship of the candidate, for stories with personal information only

Valence of personal information	Partisanship: Republican	Democrat	Independent
Positive	17.3	24.0	24.5
Neutral	27.3	35.9	48.0
Negative	55.3	40.1	27.5
	100.0% (N=300)	100.0% (N=334)	100.0% (N=64)

$X^2 = 29.96$, df = 4, $p < .001$
Cramer's V = .14

Table 7. Crosstabulation of partisanship of candidate being written about (with personal information) by the season in which the story appeared, for stories with personal information only

	Season			
Partisanship of candidate	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall
Republican	44.9	45.8	35.0	56.6
Democrat	55.1	35.6	44.7	37.7
Independent	0.0	18.6	20.3	5.7
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	(N=185)	(N=118)	(N=380)	(N=53)

$X^2 = 56.33$, df = 6, $p < .001$
Cramer's V = .20

Table 8. Kendall correlation coefficients for whether personal information is included, year of coverage, month of coverage, and valence of coverage

Variables	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Is personal information about a presidential candidate included in the story?	.07[a] (4054)	-.12[a] (4054)	-.11[a] (4054)	——	——
2. Year the paragraph ran in the paper		-.04[b] (4054)	-.01[d] (4054)	-.04[d] (754)	.05[d] (754)
3. Season the paragraph ran in the paper			.87[a] (4054)	.10[b] (754)	.05[d] (754)
4. Month the paragraph ran in the paper				.06[d] (754)	.07[c] (754)
5. Partisanship of the candidate about whom personal information is reported					-.15[a] (754)
6. Valence of the personal coverage of the candidate					

[a] $p < .001$

[b] $p < .01$

[c] $p < .05$

[d] p = ns

Newspaper Division

Are Young People Reading the Newspaper? A 25-Year Cohort Analysis

by

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Abstract

Are Young People Reading the Newspaper? A 25-Year Cohort Analysis

by

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The newspaper industry has long been concerned that it is losing the young reader. The research informing this concern is derived largely from cross-sectional studies. We argue that younger people become older, stable, newspaper readers and that a cohort analysis approach can help in understanding this phenomenon.

We look at newspaper readership and its predictors both cross-sectionally and through cohort analysis in the 25-year cumulation (1972-1996) of the General Social Survey. We conclude that cohort analysis is a useful tool for understanding how young people age into the newspaper reading habit.

Are Young People Reading the Newspaper? A 25-Year Cohort Analysis[1]

Introduction

A notion exists among today's newspaper editors and publishers that newspaper reading among young adults has declined dramatically throughout the past two to three decades. An outgrowth of this idea is the concern that if the newspaper industry does not reach these young people now, it will lose them as readers forever. Industry researchers have suggested that publishers target younger audiences in order to attract them to the newspaper, asserting that if young people do not pick up the paper now, they never will.

In order to attract the younger reader, news organizations have tried a variety of tactics. These include re-design, in which more color and graphics, bigger headlines and shorter stories are incorporated into the newspaper; writing types of stories that represent teenagers, students and "gen x-ers"; and special sections designed for young adults.

These tactics seem to have had limited success. The younger audience, in general, is still not flocking to the newspaper.

Our premise is that they never have. The argument we develop here is two-fold — conceptual and methodological. First, a conceptual idea: Young people have never read the newspaper, at least at the levels attributed to older readers. We suspect newspaper reading habits are acquired later in life, say, in a person's 30s. We argue that while the young reader has historically reported lower newspaper reading levels than older people, as a person ages, his or her newspaper reading levels increase and level off.

Second, a methodological idea: Publishers' concerns have been largely informed by a cross-sectional, one-shot survey approach to analysis. Cohort analysis, with its potential to inform through the aging process, might usefully add insight to the debate. Our concern is that reliance on cross-sectional data alone may lead to self-fulfilling prophecies of panic regarding the fate and future of young readers while denying a role for maturation in the development of newspaper readership. Cohort analysis can give us access to such maturation processes.

Considered in terms of generations, our interest here is intragenerational rather than intergenerational. Intergenerational differences in news reading behaviors may be influenced by the advent of new media technologies, but we expect that intragenerational reading patterns will show similarities from generation to generation. Meaning, once a reading life is established its patterns may be determined more by life stage than

[1] The authors thank the following for support and assistance with the acquisition of data for this project: California State University's Social Science Data Base Archive at Cal State, Los Angeles; Cal State Fullerton's Department of Information Technology, in particular Carlene Nelson, Network Applications Consultant.

by outside influence. We think publisher attention, then, might usefully be directed to life stage as well as to the challenges of new media technologies.

Our data come from a 25-year cumulation of the National Opinion Research Center's annual General Social Survey (GSS). The data extend from 1972 to 1996, offering opportunities for inter- and intra-generational study of newspaper readership and its prediction.

Using both cross-sectional and cohort approaches we consider two research questions: What has been the pattern of newspaper readership in three different age groups (18-29, 30-45, 46-89 years) over the past 25 years, and what role have education and television viewing played in newspaper readership through the period?

The paper first reviews previous literature on newspaper readership and identifies reasons why young people might not read the newspaper as often as older people do. We point out that this literature is based largely on cross-sectional analyses and we propose that a cohort analysis approach might qualify and supplement the extant literature. We then examine how and why newspaper reading levels might change during the aging process.

The study relies primarily on graphic displays to support its argument, with some statistical analyses (correlation and regression) provided to clarify differences and predictions. Our expectation is that intragenerational patterns of readership will show little change across generations. We do not doubt that newer media pose important change problems for older media. But we expect the addition of a cohort approach to analysis will encourage thinking in a longer time frame through the life cycle, rather than the immediate action called for by apocalyptic pronouncements informed largely by cross-sectional analysis.

Review of Literature

Studies on newspaper reading habits have shown a decline in newspaper readership among all age groups in the past 30 years with young people (those under 30) showing consistently lower levels of newspaper reading than older people (Cobb, 1986; Glenn, 1994; Kirsch, Jungeblut & Rock, 1988; Robinson, 1978; Stone, 1987; Times Mirror, 1990a & b). The data for younger readers have sometimes been interpreted in apocalyptic terms: If the newspaper industry does not reach young people now, it will lose them as readers forever (Carter, 1994; Fitzgerald, 1990).

The literature is derived almost entirely from cross-sectional studies in which surveys are launched for one or two years at most and comparisons are made across age categories within the same study. An assumption can arise from such analyses — that as they age, the behavior of younger respondents will mimic that of the older age categories reported in the same study and year. The reality is that this younger age group will age into older age group categories at some later date beyond the scope of the study under review. And the older age groups reported on in the same study will have been in a younger age category at a point in time earlier than the study reports. Evidence regarding aging, and changes in media use consistent with that aging, can be better acquired through cohort analysis. Cohort data may show that change through time is a more gradual phenomenon than change across age categories at the same time, which is what cross-sectional data provide.

Further, cross-sectional data can be acontextual. They are developed ad hoc in response to crises perceived by sponsors. They arise, then, in unique contexts, for example as an information-gathering tool during a perceived decline in newspaper readership in a particular demographic group. Decisions might be taken based on such data. But the impact of these decisions beyond the crisis is problematic because such issues as aging have not been appropriately addressed. Indeed, the irony is that age as a category has been identified and considered, but aging as a phenomenon cannot be addressed in such studies because of their cross-sectional nature.

Exhibit 1 offers a graphic display locating the more important newspaper readership studies across time. The studies are imposed on time series of cross-sectional studies divided into three age groups: 18-29, 30-45 and 46-89 years. The data are from the GSS cumulation that is the basis of the present study. Apart from locating the newspaper literature in time, our point in Exhibit 1 is to illustrate the idea that cross-sectional analyses can be acontextual with regard to time. With the exception of Glenn's (1994) cohort analysis of newspaper reading, television viewing and verbal ability, all of the studies identified in Exhibit 1 are cross-sectional in approach. Each of the studies is linked in our rendering directly with the youngest age group, 18-29 years. In most cases this was the age group the studies were concerned with. Most also report on newspaper use in older age groups as well.

Exhibit 1 about here

Yankelovitch, Skelly and White's two studies (1976a & b) appear in Exhibit 1 to have been executed in the middle of a precipitous decline in young people's readership. Can the plateau in readership following from 1977 to 1986 be attributed to strategies suggested by Yankelovitch et al? From this plateau, Robinson's 1978 study asserts there has been no decline in young people's (18-24 years) newspaper reading in the 1965-1975 decade. Our GSS readership measure would suggest otherwise. Robinson's 1980 study asserts the greatest decline in postwar readership appeared in the 20-29 age group. Our data extend back to 1972. But we will attempt to make the case that the rates of decline between age groups is not the issue. We will assert that all age groups show similar rates of change. Cobb (1986), writing from the tail end in our terms of a plateau in young people's readership levels, found a slight decline in overall newspaper readership between 1961 and 1984, but that the decline had been about the same in all age groups. A short-lived increase followed her publication date.

Stone (1987) reported that industry research had noted that between the years 1967 and 1974 newspaper readership declined 4% among all adults, and 10% among "young people" (18-24 year-olds). Consistent with our data in Exhibit 1, Stone reported that newspaper readership among young adults "leveled off" in the 1980s. The exhibit also shows it went into a decline from 1987 through to 1991. Kirsch et al (1988), like Yankelovitch et at (1976a & b) before them, appear caught on a downward trend in young people's readership which raises questions about the longer term validity of the data they report. Times Mirror (1990) report on relative readership levels by age over several years, but their study was executed and published in a brief "oasis" in the middle of a period when readership levels of young adults appeared to show a substantially greater rate of decline than that for older age groups.

Bagby (1991) reported a prediction by newspaper design expert Mario Garcia that in "about four or five years … the transformation toward reader-driven newspapers will be complete" (p. 23). Five years from 1991 is 1996, and the tail end of Exhibit 1 is not very encouraging regarding Garcia's "reader-driven" newspaper.

The cross-sectional data in Exhibit 1 do suggest a decline in overall readership levels from 1972 to 1996. Our grand mean decreases by nearly 10 percent over the period, but that is also about the same level as the standard deviation of the grand mean's variation though the period. Again, we will assert that the data for young people will show the same rates of change as do those for other age groups. The data in Exhibit 1 do tend to confirm this consistency in decline, but the graph for young people (18-29 years) does appear to show considerably more variation than do those for the older age groups.

Young people appear to read the newspaper at significantly lower levels than that for older people, but we assert that the decline in their readership is similar to that of older respondents. In other words, the differences between younger and older readers may merely be one of degree. From this perspective, the task for publishers is to change the "degree." All this might require is patience — waiting for younger people to become older.

Younger media consumers, while somewhat interested in news, are generally more apt to look to media other than the newspaper to find specific topics that interest them (Cobb, 1986). While they may occasionally pick up a newspaper for sports or entertainment or the comics, the mainstream newspaper — which focuses on political, economic, community and business issues — is not a resource the younger reader turns to on a regular basis. It does not "speak" to them. The older reader, on the other hand, is more likely to want a resource that provides information about a broad range of topics, from economic and political issues, to crime and human-interest stories — the kinds of material that a newspaper might offer (Stone & Boudreau, 1995). Knowing this, it may be more important for newspaper executives to target the age group that is beginning to read the newspaper on a regular basis — those in their early 30s.

Most newspaper readership studies show young people reporting lower newspaper reading levels than that for older people. For instance, a Times Mirror survey (1990b) concluded that among 18-30 year olds, 40% read the newspaper. The findings were offered for decades, showing roughly a 10% increase in newspaper readership with each decade. For example, among 31-40-year-olds, roughly 50% read the newspaper; of 41-50-year-olds, 60% read the newspaper.

In studies that attempt to look at trends in cross-sectional data across time, most conclude there has been a decline in newspaper reading levels among all people, with many researchers suggesting that the decline has been most drastic for younger readers. Some, if not all, newspaper executives view this as a continuing and relentless trend that will lead to a greater decline in overall newspaper reading (Bagby, 1991; Carter, 1994; Gersh, 1990; Fitzgerald, 1990).

Research by the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) has fueled this sense of urgency to attract younger readers (McGrath, 1995). A 24-page booklet titled "Beyond Survival: Keys to Forging Ties With Potential Readers," was distributed to all ASNE participants outlining ways in which publishers can restructure their papers to suit younger readers. A wave of readership studies in the early 1970s spawned more alternative presses and "reader-friendly" mainstream newspapers containing a lot of photographs and graphics to attract the younger reader.

All this activity seemed to have limited success. Robinson (1978), using results from national polls conducted in 1975-76, found no decline in newspaper use among people aged 18-24 during those years, but he did find a decline among older age groups of up to 13%. In his 1980 study using GSS data, Robinson found that among those aged 20-29, there was a 22% drop in newspaper readership. For those aged 30-39, there was a decline of 20 percentage points — a two percentage point difference. Robinson (1980) suggests that newspapers' strategies in the 1970s failed to "address the greatest source of attrition — the older reader."

Industry leaders today worry that young people who do not read the newspaper will never acquire the habit and that targeting that audience is the best way to attract the young person to the newspaper. But the literature has suggested that reaching out to the young reader might not work. Perhaps the steady newspaper habit of older people should be the industry's main focus. Although we do not develop the argument here, perhaps undue attention to the younger reader may even alienate older readers.

So why is the industry so concerned with reaching the younger reader? Cross-sectional studies appear to show bigger declines in young people's newspaper reading levels than those of older groups. We have noted from Exhibit 1 that this might not be the case, though it would appear that younger newspaper readers do show more variation in their readership than do older age groups.

The Young Media Consumer

Younger Americans historically report being turned off by the newspaper, and the literature offers several reasons why.

Yankelovitch et al (1976a & b) identified some of the reasons why young people do not read the newspaper in what they call "the balance sheet," a diagram from Part 1 (1976a) of their massive study funded by the Harte-Hanks newspaper chain. They assert that young people feel the newspaper is not relevant in their lives and that it does not interest them. They also found that young people find the newspaper boring, have little time to read it, think the newspaper has too much information they don't want and too little they do want, never picked up the newspaper reading habit, and only read the newspaper when they need it.

In Stone's 1987 review of research about newspapers, other reasons why young people are turned off by the newspaper include lifestyle considerations, competing media, and the fact that young people are less settled than older people.

Content preferences, however, seem to prevail. "There is something about the newspaper itself that has become a turn-off for young adults," Stone notes (1987, p. 122). He cites studies in which younger people said newspaper reading is an "old people's habit … something you see old people do while waiting for a bus"; that they believe newspapers "speak for the status quo and against change in society"; are cold and impersonal; and are a "middle-aged product written and edited by middle-aged people for a middle-aged audience" (p. 122). Aleff (1995) found that young people do not trust the media, and think news is too negative and irresponsible.

Our first research question proposes testing for the perceived decline in young people's newspaper reading levels by examining data on reported newspaper reading levels. The question also proposes examining how this apparent decline compares to that for older age groups. This phase of the study will consider the issue with cross-sectional data.

> **Research Question 1:** Does newspaper reading among 18-29 year-olds change, in cross-sectional terms, through the period from 1972 to 1996, and does it differ from that of other age groups?

Aging Americans' Newspaper Reading Levels

As people age their newspaper reading levels typically increase. The literature suggests that older age groups consistently show higher newspaper reading levels than do younger age groups.

There are several reasons why this might be so. We address here ideas of "settling down" as implied in the aging-stability and community ties hypotheses, and the role of education. We also discuss a competing hypothesis that as the population ages it watches more television and that this increase in viewing might work against increases in newspaper readership.

As people age, attitudes and behaviors tend to stabilize. This phenomenon has been referred to as the aging-stability hypothesis (Alwin, Cohen & Newcomb, 1991; Glenn, 1994). As people age, they also become less mobile and more settled. As they settle people develop community ties and subscribe to the newspaper more often (Demers, 1996; Stamm, Emig & Hesse, 1997). Because people generally settle down after college, this suggests a higher rate of readership by older, better-educated, individuals (Reina, 1995). Further, those with children in school tend to subscribe more often to the newspaper than do younger, single people (Demers, 1993). The newspaper can be an important source of information for these kinds of people, providing news about crime, community, politics and economic issues.

Times Mirror (1990) found that those who are well educated are more likely to read the newspaper than those who are less well-educated. The study, in which nearly 4,900 people were interviewed, found that 55% of college graduates read a daily newspaper; of those with some college education 41% reported reading a daily newspaper; 41% of those with a high school diploma and 34% of those with less than a high school diploma read a daily newspaper. Poindexter (1979) and Westley and Severin (1964) found non-readers were less educated than those who read a newspaper regularly.

Because young people are more mobile, less educated and have more varied lifestyles than the older audience, this should be an indication that the newspaper is not a resource that they regularly turn to. But as people mature, their interests change and the newspaper becomes a valued resource of information.

The role of competing media on newspaper reading levels is less clear, if only because the diversity of these media has left the question unsettled. We consider only television here. The Roper research organization claimed that television first surpassed newspapers in 1963 as the public's preferred medium for news (Roper, 1964; but see Rimmer & Weaver, 1987; Stempel, 1991). Times Mirror (1990) concluded that in each age category (by decades), television news watching was at least ten percentage points higher than newspaper reading among all people interviewed. Poindexter (1979) found that the main reason given for not reading the newspaper was because the respondents got their news from the television. Sixty percent of her non-readers said they got their news from the TV.

There is a notion abroad of late that the Internet is, or will soon be, the top resource for news. The literature suggests that younger people do turn elsewhere to get information that interests them. It has not been shown that that medium is the Internet.

General television viewing (i.e., non-news viewing) is negatively associated with education and with newspaper reading (Comstock, Chaffee, Katzman, McCombs & Roberts, 1978). We might conclude, then, that television viewing levels will be negatively associated with newspaper reading levels. If the typical American daily newspaper reader is one who is older, better educated, and more settled into his or her community (Reina, 1995; Stamm et al., 1997; Stone, 1987), it would seem likely that even with cultural, environmental, and technological changes, young people will grow into the newspaper reading habit. This is the idea informing our second research question. The question explores newspaper reading levels as people age through time and how education and television might be associated with this newspaper reading. This question can be explored using cohort analysis.

Research Question 2: What is the pattern of reported newspaper readership in different age cohorts from 1972 through 1996?

a. Does the 18-29 year-old cohort show an increase in levels of newspaper reading as it ages and how do the other age groups change as they age?
b. What have been the roles of education and television viewing as predictors of newspaper reading?

Method

This study involves the secondary analysis of extant data. The data come from a cumulation of the General Social Survey (GSS), an annual survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center since 1972 (Davis & Smith, 1994). The surveys are designed as part of a program of social indicator research, replicating questionnaire wording in order to facilitate time trend studies. The cumulation here extends from 1972 to 1996. There was no GSS survey in 1979, 1981, 1992, 1995 and 1997.

The data reported here involve face-to-face personal interviews with people representing the total non-institutionalized English-speaking population of the United States, 18 years and older. The sample size each year is about 1,500, with a total population in the data set reported here of more than 35,000 respondents. The samples are probability samples: block quota sampling was used in 1972-74 and for half of the 1975 and 1976 surveys. Full probability sampling was employed in 1977, 1978, 1980, 1982-1991, 1993-1994, 1996 and half of the 1975 and 1976 surveys.

A Black oversample was taken in 1982 and 1987. The oversample in 1982 was 354 persons beyond the average of 140 Blacks reported in the 1972 through 1982 samples. In 1987 it was 353 beyond the average 170 Blacks in samples from 1983 through 1987. We did not adjust for this oversampling in the present analysis. Given lower education levels in such subsamples we might expect to see lower newspaper reading levels and higher television viewing levels in the data for 1982 and 1987.

The GSS went into the field every two years in 1994 and 1996 following a change in sampling and surveying strategy. Sample sizes were dramatically increased to facilitate split sample survey practices. The sample sizes in 1994 (n=2,992) and 1996 (n=2,904) were twice the size of previous surveys. We did not adjust for this change in sample size. We assumed standard errors would be reduced with the larger sample sizes but felt this would have little impact on our findings.

This study uses four variables from the GSS. Our dependent variable is a five-point report of newspaper reading. Our independent variables are: age (in years), education (years of schooling completed), and TV viewing (hours per day respondent watches television). The age and education questions are available for every year. The newspaper reading question was asked in the years 1972, 1975, 1977-1978, 1982-1983, 1985-1991, 1993-1994 and 1996. The TV viewing question was asked in 1975, 1977-1978, 1980, 1982-1986, 1988, 1989-1991, 1993-1994. The TV viewing question was not asked of the Black oversample in 1987.

Question wording for most of our variables was the same each year. For example, the newspaper reading question was consistently asked as: "How often do you read the newspaper?" The answers are "every day," "a few times a week," "once a week," "less than once a week," "never." In the GSS, the answers are coded so that 1= "every day" and 5= "never." For this study, the codes were reversed so that 1= "never" and 5= "every day." The variable was treated as interval.

For the age category, the question was changed after 1975 from "In what year were you born?" to "What is your date of birth?" For television viewing hours, the question wording in all years is, "On the average day, about how many hours do you personally watch television?" The answers ranged from 0 to 24. For the education variable, respondents were asked about level of schooling completed. The answers ranged from 0 to 20 years. These education data are derived from several different questions asked over the years. We assumed a consistent pattern in the response set.

This study uses cohort and cross-sectional analyses. Cohort analysis is a longitudinal study approach which lends itself to prospective research. Cross-sectional research is more in the nature of the one-shot, retrospective, study. A cross-sectional study is one in which data are collected from a representative sample at only one point in time (Wimmer & Dominick, 1997). Where data are broken out by age, for example, comparisons between age groups are made at one point in time, across the one data set.

A cohort analysis is one in which a characteristic of one or more cohorts is compared at different points in time (Glenn, 1977; Ryder, 1968). It might be seen as a repeated cross-sectional study in which the analyst increments the groups of interest year by year through the data. It is not a panel study, in which the analyst returns to the same respondents. In cohort analyses, the analyst returns to the same classes of respondents.

Our "base cohort" is a group of young adults who are between the ages of 18 and 29 in the first year of our study, 1972. The other two cohorts considered in the study are age 30-45 and 46-89. We call our cohorts "age cohorts" because we are grouping them together by age and using their age as a descriptive. Other authorities refer to cohorts as "birth cohorts" because they label their cohorts according to their year of birth (Glenn, 1977). The concept is the same in both instances.

Exhibit 2 graphically illustrates some of the differences between cross-sectional and cohort data as viewed in our study.

Exhibit 2 about here

The upper line in the graph is a report of mean newspaper reading scores for an 18-29 year-old age cohort. The lower line is the mean newspaper reading score for the cross-sectional 18-29 year-old age group offered throughout the 25 years of the data set. The cohort line indicates a 1972 start for the cohort, which ranges in age from 18 to 29. It might help to consider the line in the exhibit as a mean age of 24 representing the cohort. Each year the cohort ages one year through the 25 years to 1996. The cross-sectional line is a report of mean newspaper reading for the 18-29 age group in each year through the 25 years of the study. So, the cross-sectional group's age stays at 18-29 throughout the 25 years of the study, whereas the cohort ages year by year. In this exhibit, there are differences in the patterns between the two lines. The cross-sectional data show a decline over the 25 years from highest to lowest of about 17%. The cohort data show a decline from highest to lowest value of about half that: 8%. An inspection of the graph suggests the cross-sectional data do show a decline, whereas the cohort data show no real change from 1972 through 1996.

In this study, we take cohort groups of interest and age them through the data. Comparisons within cohorts are intra-cohort, comparisons between cohorts are inter-cohort. The intra-cohort study is similar to a panel study, in which the same people are compared at different points in time. The difference is that the cohort study compares a sample of individuals, not the same individuals. The panel study examines individual changes, while the cohort study looks at trends (Glenn, 1977). The advantage of using cohort analysis is that one group can be tracked through time and subsequently trends of a population can be asserted by generalizing from the reported behaviors of the cohort group.

Cohort analyses are typically examined through charts and graphs, which show three types of effects: age effects, cohort effects and period effects. Our interest here is in age effects — the effect of age on levels of newspaper reading. However, in this type of analysis, age, period and cohort effects are confounded. This problem in cohort analysis has been referred to by Glenn (1994) as the "age-period-cohort conundrum" and by Mason and her associates (Mason, Mason, Winsborough & Poole, 1973) as the "confounding" of the joint effects of age, period and cohort effects. Glenn (1994) explains the conundrum as follows: "Since each of the three variables is a perfect linear function of the other two, linear effects of the variables are confounded with one another in any relevant data, whether they are cross-sectional, longitudinal or repeated cross-sectional" (p. 220). Exhibit 3 illustrates how the three variables can entangle each other in this age, period, cohort conundrum.

Exhibit 3 about here

Exhibit 3 is a combination plot of three measures for the 18-29 year-old cohort: newspaper reading, education, and television viewing. The age, period, cohort conundrum might be illustrated with the following question: "Why does mean education show an increase through the 25 years of the data? Shouldn't it be level?" Education shows a steady increase from grade 12.5 in 1972 to grade 14 in 1996. Some of the younger members of the cohort were likely still pursuing their formal education early in the study and that might help explain the increase through the first half of the study. Call this an age effect. But education continues to increase after this. Perhaps there is a problem in the way GSS built its samples, such that the mean education of the sample increased through the study. Perhaps education levels have increased in the population through the period 1972-1996 such that we are a better educated society? Call this a period effect. Perhaps the cohort has changed in makeup through the course of the study? More women and minorities are coming into the GSS samples each year better educated than before. This is reported in the study as an increase in level of education of the cohort. Call this a cohort effect. So, again, why does education appear to show an increase in Exhibit 3? A first glance might suggest the cohort is better educated as it ages through 1996. But this apparent increase is deceptive. The standard deviation for the cohort is nearly two grades, more than the apparent increase shown in the exhibit. This variation probably obscures any period effect. The apparent increase, then, may be due to the entangled age, period and cohort effects. Or worse, the increase we think we see may not be real at all. Glenn (1994) suggested that disentangling the conundrum requires the introduction of external data streams to the analysis. We do not have such data available to the present study.

Preliminary analyses were executed in the statistical program SPSS. As a means of data reduction all cohort and cross-sectional data for newspaper reading, education and television viewing were reduced to mean scores for groups and for years. These means, their n's and standard deviations were transferred to Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. Graphing and the correlation and regression computations offered here were executed in Excel using the means as raw scores. Lag options were attempted in the regression computations. It would seem intuitive that education might not manifest itself as a predictor of newspaper readership immediately. Newspaper readership therefore was lagged in the regression computations from zero through two years. Serial correlation was not addressed in these computations.

Where the GSS did not go into the field in particular years missing data were substituted using a smoothing technique. Scores from years surrounding missing years were averaged according to the number of missing cells in the interval. These constructed data provided cleaner looking graphs. These constructed data for missing years were excluded in statistical computations.

No smoothing was effected in the graphing of substantive data runs. A smoothed grand mean is offered in Exhibit 1. All data in Exhibit 7 are smoothed to facilitate interpretation. Smoothing was effected with a three-point moving average, iterated two times to deliver a useful smooth.

Results

In this section we first report some of the general characteristics of our data, then we describe the data associated with each of our three cohorts. Finally a series of exhibits and statistical tests are offered in association with the reporting of our analyses of the study's research questions.

Exhibit 4 offers descriptive statistics for our three age groups and three independent variables. Differences in the n's for the three variables are artifacts of the number of years the questions were asked.

Exhibit 4 about here

Exhibit 4 shows that the mean newspaper reading score was more than 3.5 for all of the age groups studied. More impressively, the mean newspaper reading score for all three age groups was greater than 3.4 in each year in the data. If a score of 3.0 means the respondent read the newspaper once a week, then the average person aged 18 to 29 reported reading the newspaper at least "once a week" to "a few times a week." So young people report they are reading the newspaper. They are just not reading newspapers as often as older respondents are. Further, the oldest age group (age 46-89 years) reported mean newspaper reading levels of at least 4.0 throughout the data, meaning this oldest group reported reading the newspaper at least "a few times per week" throughout the tested years.

Our first research question dealt with the perceived drastic decline among the 18-29-year-old group. The question was as follows: Does newspaper reading among 18-29 year-olds change, in cross-sectional terms, through the period from 1972 to 1996, and does it differ from that of other age groups? The short answer is yes and yes.

Exhibit 1 compares the mean newspaper reading scores of the three cross-sectional age groups from 1972 to 1996. Newspaper reading among the 18-29 year-old age group does change — it shows a decline. The 18-29-year-old group started with a mean newspaper reading score of 4.07 in 1972 and ended with a score of 3.42 in 1996 — a difference of .53 (16%).

In order to compare the rates of change between the three age groups a Pearson correlation was computed. No adjustment was made for any serial correlation. The correlation coefficients are offered in Exhibit 5. We speculated that a significant correlation between the age groups would indicate similar rates of decline, while no relationship would indicate the age groups were independent of each other with regard to newspaper reading levels.

Exhibit 5 about here

Exhibit 5 shows a strong positive correlation ($r=.85$, $df=23$, $p<.05$) between the newspaper reading levels of the 18-29 and the 30-45 year-old cross-sectional age groups, and moderate positive correlations between the 18-29 and the 46-89 year-old age groups ($r=.43$, $df=23$, $p<.05$) and between the 30-45 and 46-89 year-old age groups ($r=.54$, $df=23$, $p<.05$). This indicates that the three age groups have tended to decline at about the same rate.

Exhibit 1, however, does indicate differences among the three cross-sectional age groups. The 18-29-year-olds – the "young" group – show a consistently lower pattern of newspaper readership than the older groups. Using a mean of the grand means in Exhibit 1 as our base (mean score 4.13) we find that the two older age groups cluster nearer to the grand mean (30-45 mean=4.14; 46-89 mean=4.23) than does the 18-29 year-olds with its lower mean of 3.73.

Research Question 2 asked the following:

What is the pattern of reported newspaper readership in different age cohorts from 1972 through 1996? Two additional questions were posed:

a. Does the 18-29 year-old cohort show an increase in levels of newspaper reading as it ages and how do the other age groups change as they age?
b. What have been the roles of education and television viewing as predictors of newspaper reading?

Exhibit 6 is an expanded plot of mean newspaper reading levels for our three grouped age cohorts.

Exhibit 6 about here

Research Question 2 first asked about patterns of readership among the three cohorts. The general pattern is one of substantial differences in 1972 with convergence through 1996. A further characteristic of this general pattern is that the convergence is not one in which the two younger cohorts' newspaper reading levels move up through time to the newspaper reading levels of the oldest cohort. Rather we see something more akin to a regression, in which all three cohorts converge to a more central level. We had assumed that reading levels would increase with age, consistent with an idea that the oldest age group would serve as an exemplar toward which the younger cohorts would move. The rates of change are somewhat deceptive as offered in the expanded plots in Exhibit 6. A closer inspection of the vertical scale in the exhibit reminds us that the changes are not as dramatic as they might appear to be. This caution should be noted in all our exhibits which have the word "expanded" in their title.

Research Question 2a asked about patterns of readership in the 18-29 year-old cohort. For the purposes of interpretation, assume a mean age for the cohort of 24. By 1978 the cohort is aged 30 and at this point a gradual increase in newspaper reading is reported through to age 45 in 1993. This is consistent with our expectation that as people age their newspaper reading levels would increase. There is a consistent drop in reading levels across all three cohorts in the exhibit for 1994 and 1996. This is problematic. We think it might be an artifact of the data rather than a substantive trend so we choose not to incorporate it into the discussion here.

Research Question 2a also asked about patterns of newspaper readership in the other two cohorts. As we expected, the older age group (46-89 year-olds) showed the most consistency in levels of readership. We attribute the substantial dip in 1987 for this cohort to the Black oversample in this year. We had anticipated that the oversample might have some impact on newspaper reading.

The most dramatic pattern is that for the 30-45 year-old cohort. It shows a substantial decline through the period. Again, for the purposes of interpretation, assume a mean age for this cohort of 38 in 1972. This group reports the highest reading levels — near 4.6 on our scale — in 1972. They age to 63 by 1996 and at that point report reading levels of about 4.1. Yet our data analyses show that across the data set as a whole, respondents aged 65 showed the <u>highest</u> levels of newspaper readership. The lower levels of readership reported by our 30-45 year-old cohort when they reach 63 years of age may be a reminder that this cohort is somewhat unique and should not be regarded as typical of all cohorts. We address this point further in our discussion section.

Research Question 2b asked the following: What have been the roles of education and television viewing as predictors of newspaper reading? This question was resolved in two ways: graphically, and with a series of multiple regression computations executed on data from the 18-29 year-old cohort.

Exhibit 3 shows a combination plot for the 18-29 year-old cohort of mean newspaper reading, television viewing and education. A caution: the ordinate (Y-axis) is a combination scale. A forced break has been introduced on the ordinate to accommodate the lower numerical values associated with television viewing and newspaper reading and the larger values associated with levels of education.

The plot of newspaper reading in Exhibit 3 appears to be relatively static through the 25-year period of the study. Education shows an apparent increase through the period so we might expect it to be a positive predictor of newspaper reading. (Recall though that this apparent increase in education level was discussed earlier in the context of the age, period, cohort conundrum). Television viewing levels show a decline in the plot, so we expect that if it is a predictor of newspaper reading it will be a negative predictor.

Newspaper reading was regressed on education and television viewing in a series of lagged computations. We review here the zero, one- and two-year lags of newspaper reading. At zero lag the regression equation accounted for nearly 27% of the variance (R^2= 26.75) in newspaper reading. Education was a significant predictor (Regression coefficient=.25, $p<.05$) but television viewing was not. The regression equation failed to reach significance when newspaper reading was lagged by one year, but did show significance when newspaper reading was lagged two years (R^2= 50.86, Regression coefficients: Education=.37, $p<.05$, TV viewing=.39, $p<.05$). The finding that education in particular might have an impact on newspaper reading two years later is intuitively appealing. Given we did not address the issue of serial correlation in our analyses, however, this issue needs more work before any support can be claimed for the finding.

Conclusion

This study's goal was to better understand the newspaper reading behaviors of young adults, particularly how those behaviors might change as they age. We asked two general questions: What are the patterns of readership in cross-sectional and cohort-derived data for young readers, and how might they differ from those of older age groups? We have found differences in the patterns between cross-sectional and cohort-derived data and between the readership behaviors of younger and older cohorts. These differences are such that we now feel ready to offer some preliminary conclusions to the industry.

The differences there are between cross-sectional and cohort data show up most dramatically with younger readers. Exhibit 2 shows this clearly with the diverging plots of cross-sectional and cohort data. This exhibit features our younger age group. Other plots we have done on the same data for the two older age groups show markedly less divergence. This suggests to us that cohort analyses can be most useful in understanding how younger people age into their 30s and the life stage that we have argued signals the beginning of stable newspaper reading. We have found the newspaper reading habit to be most stable in our oldest age group. So, cohort analysis might not be so useful a research tool with older age groups, at least with regard to newspaper reading.

We have two recommendations for future research. Our first recommendation is to develop better measures and controls in the data we have worked with here. Our newspaper readership measure is a five-point variable we have treated as an interval measure. There is a need for more diversity in type and scale in the media use measures and their predictors in the GSS. Age might usefully be extended back beyond the GSS start of 18 years. The media behaviors we are interested in get their start long before respondents turn 18. Further, GSS samples need to deliver more younger and older people. For example, across the 25 years of the cumulated data set there were just 115 18-year olds and 47 88-year olds.

With regard to controls, several methodological issues arise that could be addressed in future research. We did not address the following issues: serial correlation; standardizing the data, for example, to account for changes in gender proportions as cohorts age; weighting for the oversampling and split sampling that characterizes many of the GSS surveys. Further, we did not consider a point Glenn reported he adjusted for in his 1994 cohort study — that the GSS samples by households rather than by individuals, yet it is (aggregated) individuals we are attempting to study.

Our second recommendation is that we need to consider cohorts more as serial phenomena. In the present study we have evaluated just three parallel cohorts, all of which we started at one point in time, 1972. They gave us the longest run (25 years) possible in the data, but our narrow approach limits the potential that these rich GSS data have to offer. There is a need to develop the facility to simultaneously analyze many cohorts over many years. Exhibit 7 might be seen as the beginnings of an attempt to address this idea. The exhibit shows smoothed newspaper readership data for five successive 18-29 year cohorts with starts in 1972, 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1990. An 18-29 year cross-sectional plot is also offered. The exhibit shows how each cohort's plot starts from the cross-sectional trend line, the exhibit's 3-dimensional rendering notwithstanding. The exhibit confirms our earlier assertions regarding consistencies in intragenerational patterns of newspaper reading. The successive cohorts show similar patterns through their respective life stages, at least to the degree the 25 years of data studied here allow.

Exhibit 7 does suggest, however, that there are intergenerational issues that bear further investigation. The decline in the cross-sectional plot suggests a tendency toward lower start points for successive cohorts. The present study's concern has been to look beyond these start dates in order to focus attention on newspaper reading behaviors throughout the life cycle.

So, while younger readers do report reading the newspaper at lower levels than do older age groups, their newspaper reading showed similar patterns as they aged. This should be reassuring to the newspaper industry. Our expectation that younger people will come into the newspaper reading fold as they age appears to be supported. Exhibit 7 does suggest, however, that through the years studied here successive cohorts came into the newspaper reading fold at lower reading levels. This shows up in the 20-year time frame of the exhibit as a difference in mean reading scores between the first cohort (a 1972 start, mean=4.07) and the most recent cohort (a 1990 start, mean=3.58) of 9.8% on our 5-point newspaper reading measure.

Exhibit 7 confirms for us, then, that a cohort approach can add insight to the newspaper readership debate by encouraging consideration of reading throughout the life cycle. The exhibit also reminds us, however, that there are other forces beyond those addressed in the present study which appear to be having an impact on newspaper readership over time.

Exhibit 7 about here

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Exhibit 1

Expanded Plot of Cross-Sectional Mean Newspaper Reading Levels for Three Age Groups, 1972-1996, with Grand Mean

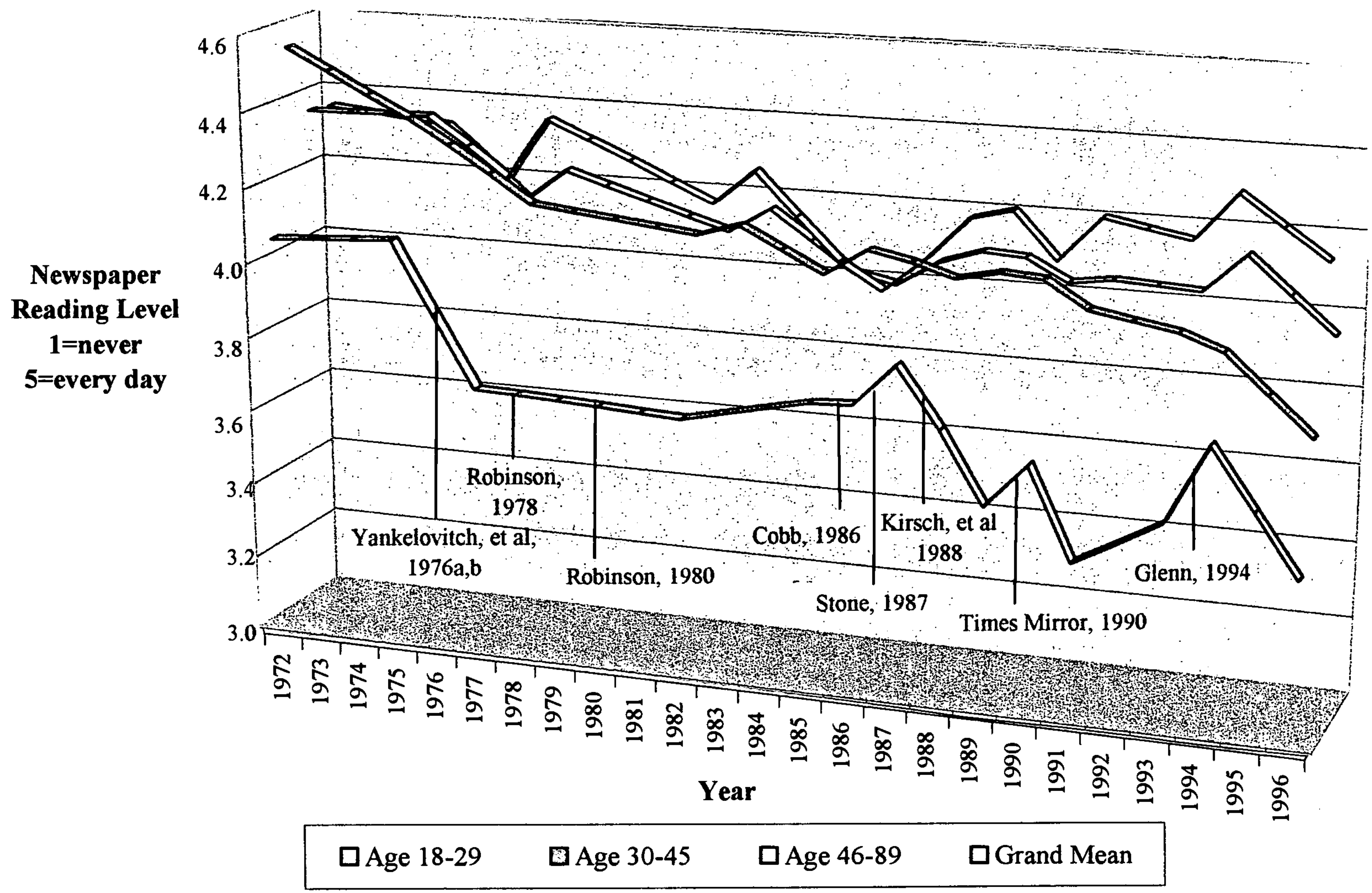

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Exhibit 2

Expanded Plot Comparing Mean Newspaper Reading Levels for Grouped Age 18-29 Year Cohort and Cross Sections, 1972-1996

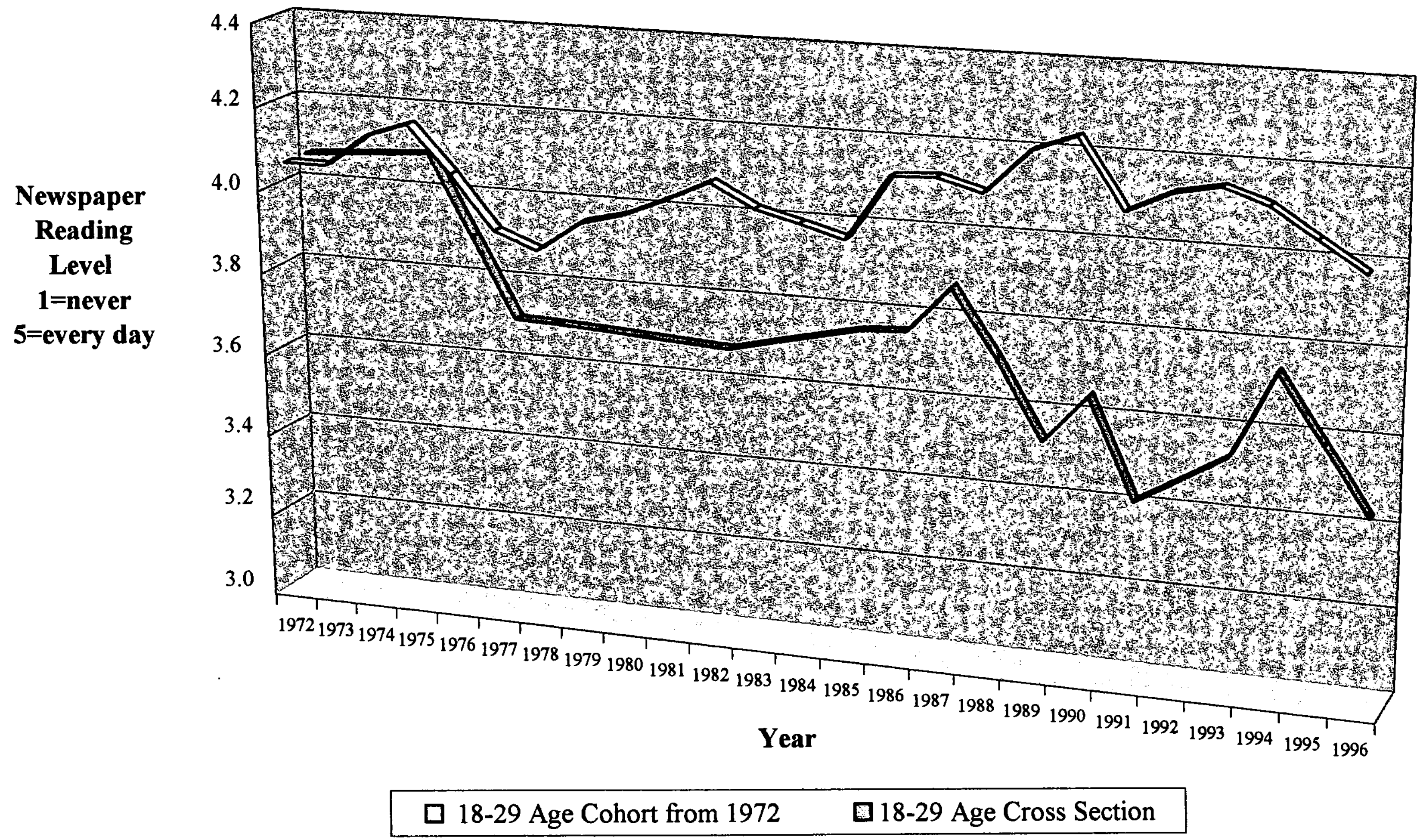

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Exhibit 3

Expanded Plot of Mean Newspaper Reading, TV Viewing, and Education for 18-29 Year-Old Age Cohort

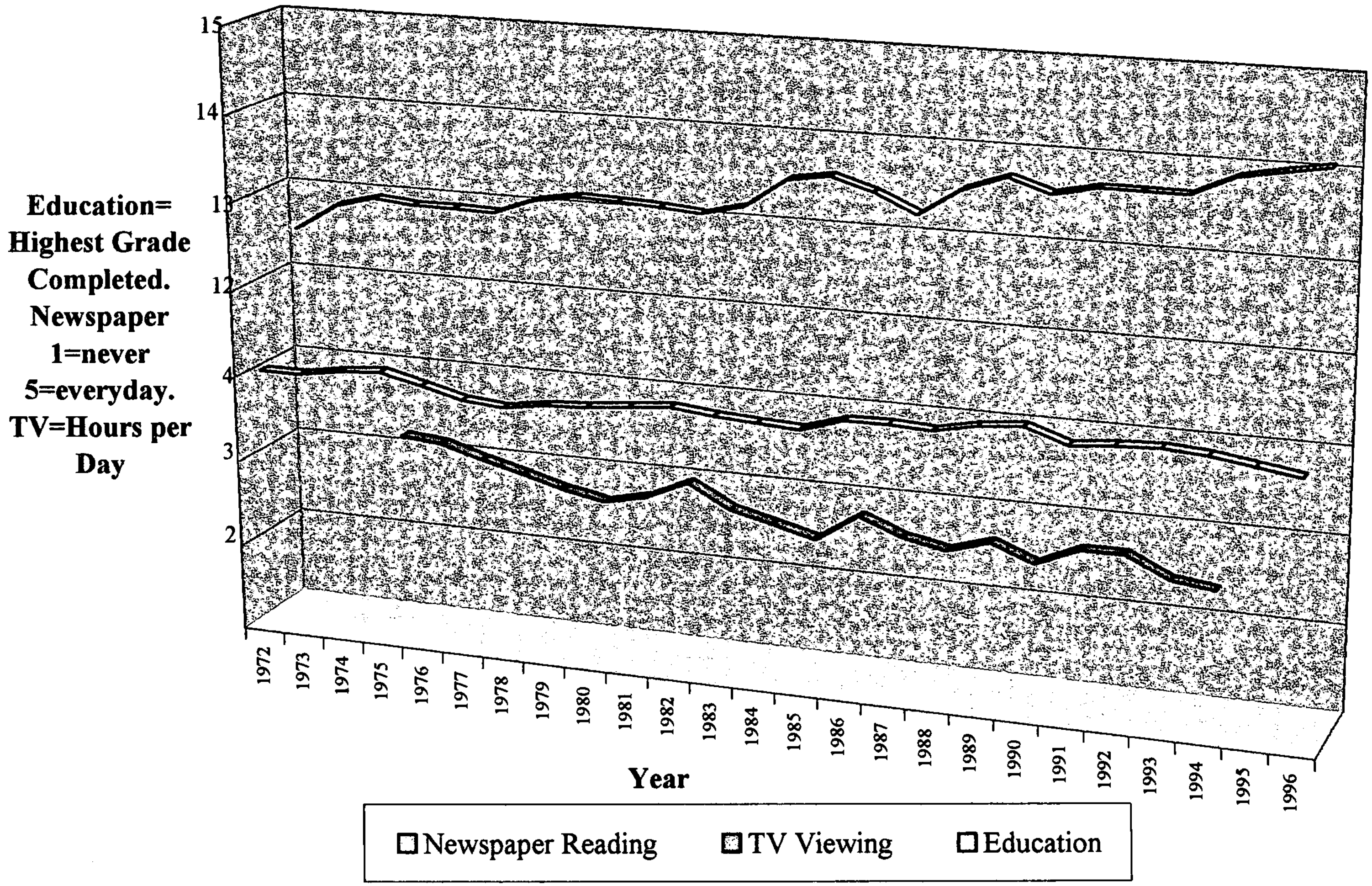

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Exhibit 4

Descriptive Statistics for Three Cross-Sectional Age Groups (18-29 years, 30-45 years, 46-89 years), 1972-1996.

	Newspaper Reading			Television Viewing			Education		
Age	n	mean	st dev	n	Mean	st dev	n	mean	st dev
18-29	5,387	3.71	1.15	4,610	3.21	2.25	8,153	12.66	1.91
30-45	7,694	4.11	1.10	6,529	2.64	1.90	11,559	13.07	2.79
46-89	10,177	4.21	1.11	8,664	3.21	2.05	15,335	10.83	3.24
Totals	23,258	4.11*		19,803	2.98*		35,047	12.36*	

* Total means offered as grand means, not as average of age category means

Exhibit 5

Correlation Matrix Showing Zero Order Inter-Cohort and Cross-Sectional Associations for Newspaper Reading Levels

	Grouped Age Cohorts (Age in 1972)			Cross Sectional Age Groups		
	18-29 Years	30-45 Years	46-89 Years	18-29 Years	30-45 Years	46-89 Years
18-29 Age Cohort	1.0					
30-45 Age Cohort	-.23	1.0				
46-89 Age Cohort	-.19	.29	1.0			
18-29 Age Cross Section	.03	.71*	.28	1.0		
30-45 Age Cross Section	-.02	.80*	.34	.85*	1.0	
46-89 Age Cross Section	-.22	.51*	.96*	.43*	.54*	1.0

* Pearson correlation coefficient significantly different from zero, p<.05

Exhibit 6

Expanded Plot of Mean Newspaper Reading Levels for Three Grouped Age Cohorts, 1972-1996

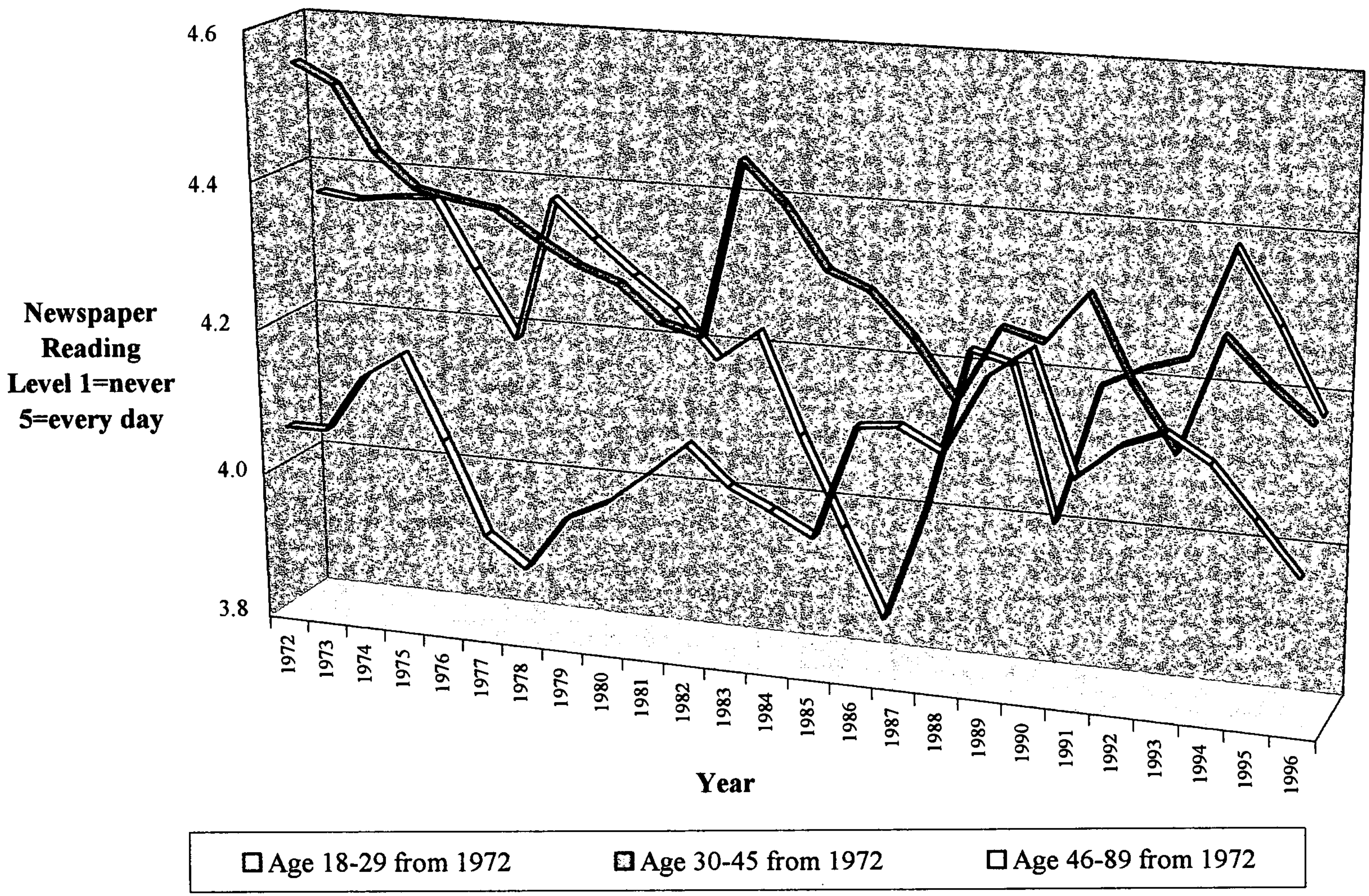
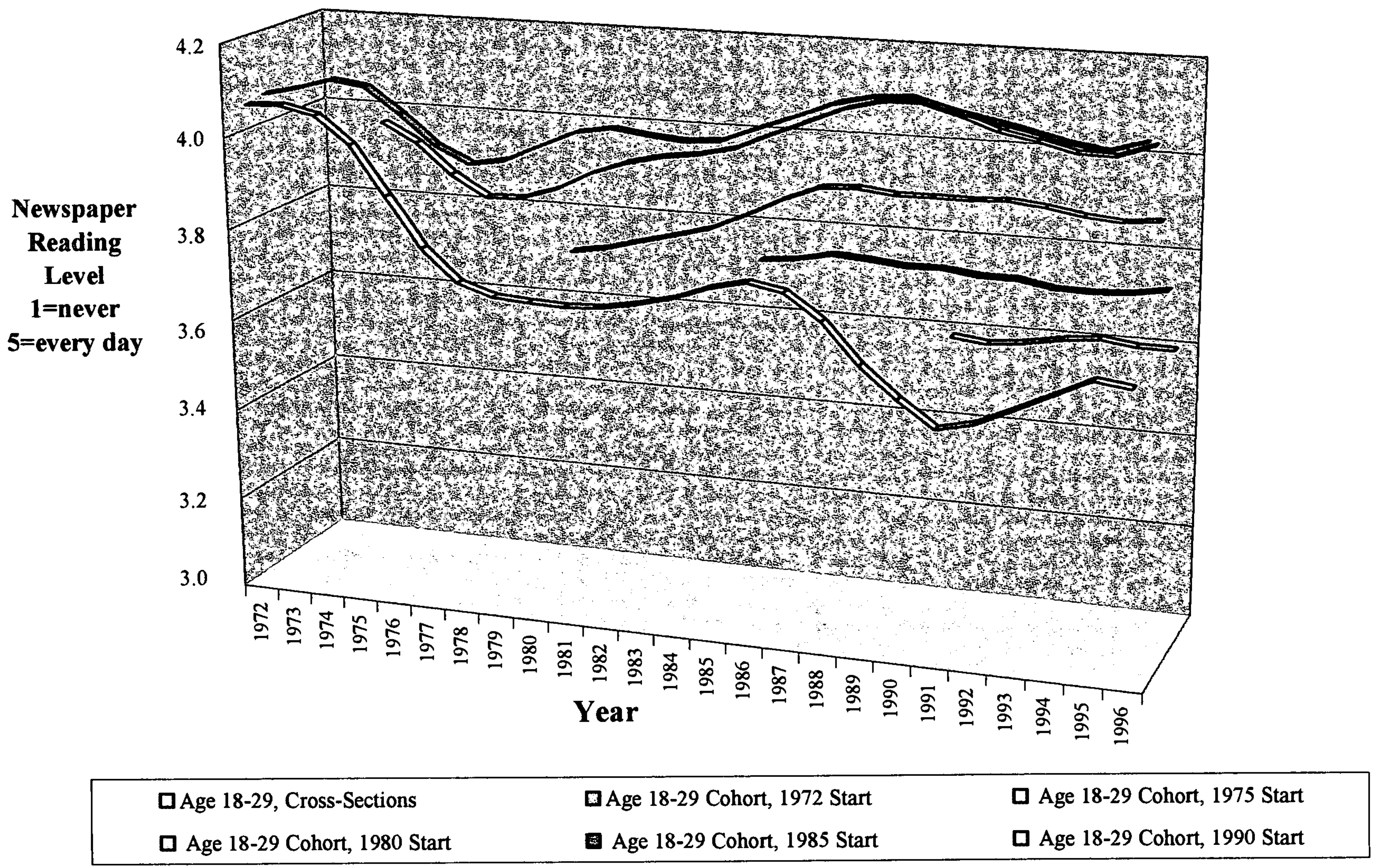


Exhibit 7

Mean Newspaper Reading Levels: Expanded, Smoothed Plots of Age 18-29 Cross-Sections & Five Successive Cohorts



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**Job Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction
of Texas Newspaper Reporters**

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Abstract:

This study surveyed 365 Texas daily newspaper reporters in spring 1998 to explore the conceptual distinction between job satisfaction and dissatisfaction as well as factors behind job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Results indicated the reporters' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction were different concepts. Path analysis showed the predictors of their job satisfaction include sense of achievement, personal growth, newsroom policy, impact on community, and autonomy. The analysis also showed the predictors of their dissatisfaction include pay and work conditions.

INTRODUCTION

Journalists' job satisfaction can be viewed as an important indicator of job commitment (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1994, 1996), which has been found to affect employee turnover (Igbaria & Greenhaus, 1992). Job satisfaction in the newsroom has gained more importance as newspapers face shrinking readership (Dizard, 1994) and need to stem revenue loss resulting from high turnover (White, 1995).

Because of high turnover rates of newspaper reporters (Moss, 1978; Tharp, 1991), understanding job dissatisfaction is crucial because dissatisfaction, rather than satisfaction, is among the major reasons journalists of all types (including newspaper reporters) want to leave their field (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). In addition, it is important to study job satisfaction because reasons behind satisfaction are closely tied to job performance (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959; Herzberg, 1968, 1987; Shore & Martin, 1989).

However, most journalism researchers have tackled the issue by treating both concepts as opposite ends of the same continuum (Bergen & Weaver, 1988; Chusmir, 1984; Stamm & Underwood, 1993; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1994). Such an approach reflects the prevailing view that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are determined by the same group of factors (Iiacqua, Schumacher & Li, 1995). But Herzberg and associates argue job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are different concepts affected by a different set of human needs (factors) (Herzberg et al., 1959; Herzberg, 1968, 1987). Dozens of studies testing his theory found support for it (Bockman, 1971; Moorhead & Griffin, 1989). However, none were directly related to newspaper journalists.

Because past research on newspaper journalists seems to suggest that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are influenced by different factors (Bergen & Weaver, 1988; Chusmir, 1984; Joseph, 1981, 1982a, 1982b, 1982c; Tharp, 1991; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1994, 1996), Herzberg's theory should be tested on newspaper journalists, especially on the reporters, who have a high turnover rate (Moss, 1978). Support by such a test may provide a better model to explain journalist satisfaction and, we contend, have an important bearing on newsroom management. So, in order to test the theory in the context of newspaper reporters, we identify and statistically analyze factors affecting the reporters' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction to see if they affect different concepts.

But first, we will review the pertinent literature and explain which theoretical model for job satisfaction is most appropriate.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Explaining the appropriateness of Herzberg's theory also means discussing different factors affecting newspaper reporters' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, as well as rival theories exploring job satisfaction.

For example, according to Likert (1961, 1967), organizations with democratic--as opposed to autocratic--management styles produce employees with higher levels of job satisfaction. Although Likert implied that work autonomy affects job satisfaction, he did not account for other factors affecting reporter satisfaction, such as salaries and newsroom policy.

On the other hand, Maslow (1954) identifies five types of innate needs that motivate humans. The three lower-level needs--physiological (such as food and water), security (such as shelter), and belongingness (such as acceptance, love)--are deficiency needs that must be satisfied before a person can fulfill the two higher-level growth needs: esteem (such as recognition) and self-actualization (creativity).

Compared with Likert, Maslow is more useful in explaining reporters' job satisfaction because he recognized different types of needs that motivate people (Lacy, Sohn & Wicks, 1993). For example, salaries can be viewed as a physiological need that motivates reporters, while quality of their newspapers can be seen as a self-actualization need. But Maslow's theory also is sequentially rigid in that people have to satisfy basic needs before they can fulfill higher needs. Maslow also does not discuss what happens if higher-level needs stop being fulfilled (Lacy et al., 1993).

Alderfer's (1972) theory addresses these issues by arguing that human beings have three basic needs: existence, relatedness, and growth (ERG). As to reporter satisfaction, Alderfer's theory is better in that it recognizes a person can be motivated by more than one need at a time, and it also explains that if higher-level needs are not satisfied, the person may return to lower-level needs as motivators (Lacy et al., 1993). But the theory fails to distinguish between satisfaction and dissatisfaction--an important distinction because a synthesis of past research on newspaper journalists indicates that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are determined by different groups of factors (Bergen & Weaver, 1988; Chusmir, 1984; Joseph, 1981, 1982a, 1982b, 1982c; Stamm & Underwood, 1993; Tharp, 1991; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1994, 1996). Even though not directly testing on the satisfaction-dissatisfaction distinction, these studies suggest that newspaper reporters' satisfaction is affected by factors such as job autonomy, the chance to help readers, and newspaper policy, while dissatisfaction is affected by pay, work conditions and promotion opportunities.

Unlike the Alderfer, Herzberg rejected the assumptions that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are at different ends of one continuum (Herzberg et al.,1959; Herzberg, 1968, 1987). He argued satisfaction and dissatisfaction are different concepts, each affected by a different set of human needs (factors), called work values. Herzberg described those needs determining job dissatisfaction as hygiene factors--extrinsic factors found in the job environment and related to biological needs for survival and innate drives to avoid pain. On the other hand, Herzberg described those needs affecting job satisfaction as motivators--intrinsic factors found in the job content and are human needs for psychological growth, such as sense of achievement and autonomy. Therefore, Herzberg considers multiple factors (e.g., autonomy, sense of achievement, newsroom policy, work conditions and pay) related to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory has been scrutinized more closely than most other theories in organizational behavior (Pinder, 1984). Herzberg's theory may have stimulated more research on job satisfaction than any other satisfaction theory (Shaver, 1978).

Over the past four decades, dozens of studies conducted on workers in different occupations have found support for Herzberg's theory (Bockman, 1971; Caston & Braito, 1985; Cohen, 1974; Iiacqua et al., 1995; Knoop, 1994; Phillipchuk & Whittaker, 1996; Rosenfeld & Zdep, 1971; Schawartz, Jenusaitis & Stark, 1963; Shaver, 1978), while some studies extended it (Rosenfeld & Zdep, 1971; Iiacqua et al., 1995). We reviewed the empirical support for Herzberg's theory to build the theoretical framework for the current study. Major findings from the studies confirming Herzberg's theory include the following: (1) Motivators (intrinsic values) primarily contribute to job satisfaction and hygiene factors (extrinsic values) primarily contribute to job dissatisfaction; (2) specific motivators or hygiene factors may change from profession to profession; and (3) a minority of work values may neither be motivators nor hygiene factors and should be categorized as "neutral" factors.

Different Factors Behind Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

Most studies that confirmed Herzberg's theory did so by finding that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are attributable to different groups of factors--i.e., job satisfaction is affected primarily by motivators (or intrinsic factors), while job dissatisfaction is influenced primarily by hygiene factors (or extrinsic factors). For example, researchers (Schawartz et al., 1963) asked 111 subjects from 21 public utility companies to recall two experiences, one pleasant and the other unpleasant, from their work experiences. The researchers identified achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and advancement as motivators (which contributed to job satisfaction).

On the other hand, 11 items related to the job context were identified as hygiene factors (which contributed to job dissatisfaction).

As another example, Shaver (1978) polled 235 journalism graduates from the classes of 1960 and 1970 to explore educators' questions about journalism graduates' job satisfaction. The subjects were asked to select from a list of 24 factors those that affected their job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The study showed job satisfaction and dissatisfaction were primarily caused by different groups of factors. The four motivators cited most frequently as contributing to subjects' satisfaction were possibility of growth, the work itself, responsibility, and achievement--all intrinsic factors. In contrast, the two factors contributing most to subjects' dissatisfaction were poorly handled company policy and low pay, both of which are extrinsic factors.

In an attempt to test the validity of Herzberg's theory in higher-education teachers, Iiacqua, Schumacher and Li (1995) surveyed 83 of the 137 faculty members at an independent private business college. The study provides support for Herzberg's study more than three decades after the theory was proposed, showing that the theory can sustain the test of time. It also supports Herzberg's theory may need modification due to the existence of "a neutral factor," which affects satisfaction and dissatisfaction about equally. The second point is especially intriguing: Since there is at least one factor that affects both satisfaction and dissatisfaction about equally, satisfaction and dissatisfaction cannot be entirely unrelated.

Although Herzberg's original 1959 study (Herzberg et al.) used fairly generic motivators (achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, and advancement) and hygiene factors (company policy and administration, supervision, salary, interpersonal relations, and work conditions), the exact combination of work values may change from profession to profession. For example, community college instructors' motivators and hygiene factors (Cohen, 1974) are different from those of mining company workers (Rosenfeld & Zdep, 1971). Therefore, we need to examine possible work values for the journalism profession.

A synthesis of past research (Bergen & Weaver, 1988; Chusmir, 1984; Joseph, 1981, 1982a, 1982b, 1982c; Stamm & Underwood, 1993; Tharp, 1991; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1994, 1996) shows that reporters' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are likely to be affected by different groups of factors. The synthesis suggests that the following factors are more likely to affect reporters' job satisfaction than their dissatisfaction: autonomy [1], sense of achievement [2], personal growth [3], interesting nature of work [4], and impact on the community [5]. These factors (or, in Herzberg's terms, work values) are directly related to the job content. Specifically, autonomy relates to the amount of freedom a reporter could get from his or her job, sense of achievement is a feeling about ompleting a job, personal growth refers to what one can learn from the job, interesting nature of work is a feeling one would get from doing the job, and impact on community is an outcome of one's job.

The synthesis also suggests that the following factors are more likely to affect newspaper reporters' job dissatisfaction than their satisfaction: pay [6], work conditions [7] and promotion opportunities [8] (Tharp, 1991; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1994, 1996). These factors (or work values) are directly related to the job environment. Specifically, pay relates to the financial compensation for the job, work conditions refer to the situations under which the job is carried out (such as work schedule, job stress and workplace facilities), and promotion opportunities relate to job status. In addition, although evidence is inconclusive as to whether job security should be a factor behind satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1994, 1996), job security is related more to the work environment (than the job content) and should influence reporters' job dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al. 1959; Herzberg, 1968, 1987).[9]

Finally, different from other work values, which either affect satisfaction or dissatisfaction, newsroom policy (on whether news quality or ad income should take the priority) was found to affect both the reporters' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Bergen & Weaver, 1988; Stamm & Underwood, 1993; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1994).[10]

In sum, although past studies on newspaper reporters' job satisfaction did not specifically test Herzberg's theory (i.e., they did not treat satisfaction and dissatisfaction as separate concepts), they implied the possibility that reporters' satisfaction and dissatisfaction may be affected by different groups of factors. Some studies also suggested that newsroom policy is likely to affect both the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of newspaper reporters. If these implications are true, our knowledge about the satisfaction-dissatisfaction distinction is incomplete. Such a distinction is important because it is job dissatisfaction--rather than satisfaction--that is a major contributor to why journalists leave the field (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996).

Hypotheses

If job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are different concepts, they have to be affected by different groups of factors (except for a minority of work values that are neutral factors, whose existence suggests that the two concepts may be somewhat correlated[11]). Based on the rationale, we proposed the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis One: Newspaper reporters' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are affected by different groups of factors.

According to Herzberg (Herzberg et al., 1959; Herzberg, 1968, 1987) and based on the synthesis of past research discussed earlier, motivators or intrinsic factors behind newspaper reporters' job satisfaction, should include autonomy, sense of achievement, personal growth, interesting nature of work, and impact on the community. These factors are intrinsic factors because they are more related to job content. For example, a reporter's autonomy refers to the amount of professional freedom he or she has in daily work (daily story assignments), sense of achievement reflects how reporters feel they have achieved through daily work, and personal growth is part of the experience of daily work. Therefore, we proposed a second hypothesis:

Hypothesis Two: Newspaper reporters' job satisfaction is predicted by motivators, or factors related to their job content, such as autonomy, sense of achievement, personal growth, interesting nature of work, and impact on community.

Autonomy, sense of achievement, personal growth, interesting nature of work, and impact on community are directly related to the job content and are more likely to allow the reporters to experience psychological growth. Therefore, these factors likely enable the reporters to have higher job satisfaction. On the other hand, pay, work conditions, and promotion opportunities are not directly related to the content of the jobs (in the case of newspaper reporters, the daily assignments) but more directly related to either monetary reward (pay), work conditions, or the chance to get ahead in organization (promotion opportunities). All of these--pay, work conditions, and promotion opportunities--are directly related to the environment under which the job is performed. Therefore, pay, work conditions, and promotion opportunities should be hygiene factors, or factors affecting the reporters' job dissatisfaction. Also, although no empirical evidence showing whether job security should be a factor affecting job satisfaction (motivator) or dissatisfaction (hygiene factor), job security is likely to be a hygiene factor since it is more related to the job environment. Therefore, we proposed a third hypothesis:

Hypothesis Three: Newspaper reporters' job dissatisfaction is predicted by hygiene factors, or factors related to their job environment, such as pay, job security, promotion opportunities, and work conditions.

In addition, newsroom policy (on whether news quality or ad income should take the priority) could be focused on either news quality or the need to earn more advertising dollars depending on a newspaper's policy emphasis (Stamm & Underwood, 1993). For example, if an editor decided to publish a public relations article for a potential advertiser on a regular news page, it would hurt news quality. On the other hand, if an editor decided not to publish such an article, it would help news quality but may hurt potential ad income. Related both to the job content (news quality) and job environment (ad income), newsroom policy (on whether news quality or ad income should take the priority) could be both a hygiene factor and motivator (i.e., a neutral factor that contributes to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction about equally).[12] Therefore, we proposed a fourth hypothesis:

Hypothesis Four: Newsroom policy (on whether news quality or advertising income should take the priority) is a predictor of both newspaper reporters' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

METHODS

Population

The population of the study is daily newspaper reporters in Texas, where the circulation distribution pattern of newspapers is similar to that of the entire United States (Editorial & Publisher International Yearbook, 1997).[13] Therefore, studying Texas newspapers should not pose a significant problem for external validity.

Approach

We chose to conduct a survey since its application is aimed at understanding the general patterns of a larger population from which the sample was initially selected (Babbie, 1990). In terms of various survey methods, this study used a mail survey because of the anonymity (so respondents may be more likely to answer sensitive questions truthfully) and the low cost it provided (Wimmer & Domnick, 1994).

Pretest

A pretest was conducted on a central Texas daily newspaper in March and April 1997. The pretest questionnaire consisted of 96 items, including 70 items revised from the widely used job descriptive index (JDI) that measures overall job satisfaction (Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson & Paul, 1989; Yeager, 1981); 22 items related to possible work values of newspaper reporters developed from a synthesis of past research (Bergen & Weaver, 1988; Chusmir, 1984; Joseph, 1981, 1982a, 1982b, 1982c; Stamm & Underwood, 1993; Tharp, 1991; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1994, 1996), and four demographic items. The JDI was used because it measures job satisfaction (Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969) with consistency and reasonably high reliabilities across different samples (Jung, Dalessio & Johnson, 1986), and is recommended for continual use because its validity is considered good among available methods (Buckley, Carraher & Cote, 1992). Although the small pretest sample size (n = 12) may render what was found to be non-generalizable to the population of reporters, the findings provided some preliminary evidence that newspaper reporters' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction could be determined by different factors.[14]

In addition, further support of Herzberg's theory was found by statistically regressing the intrinsic dimensions of job satisfaction (satisfaction with work, satisfaction with supervision, and satisfaction with coworkers) on the motivators as a composite scale (scale reliability coefficient alpha = .90).[15] The findings showed that motivators as a whole were significant predictors of intrinsic dimensions (satisfaction with work, satisfaction with supervision and satisfaction with coworkers)[16] of overall job satisfaction as measured by the JDI, but were not significant predictors of the extrinsic dimensions of overall job satisfaction (satisfaction with pay and satisfaction with promotions).[17] Since the intrinsic dimensions of the overall job satisfaction are closely related to job satisfaction [18], Herzberg's theory received support for the part that posits a link between motivators and job satisfaction.

Regression analysis on pretest data also showed that hygiene factors as a composite scale (scale reliability coefficient alpha = .66) [19] were significant predictors for one extrinsic dimension (satisfaction with promotions) (R square = .33, $p = .05$) but not a significant predictor of another extrinsic dimension (satisfaction with pay) and all intrinsic dimensions (satisfaction with work, satisfaction with supervision and satisfaction with coworkers). Since the extrinsic dimensions of overall job satisfaction are closely related to job dissatisfaction [20], the findings that hygiene factors as a whole were a significant predictor of one of the two extrinsic job satisfaction dimension provides limited support for Herzberg's theory (Herzberg et al., 1959, Herzberg, 1968, 1987).

The pretest also showed the reliability of the motivators and hygiene factors as a scale fell within acceptable ranges.[21] Similarly, alpha reliability tests showed the reliability for the five JDI dimensions were satisfactory.[22] Overall then, the reliabilities of the measurement scales in the pretest are satisfactory.

Finally, the pretest's 50 percent response rate from three mailings was used to estimate the minimum number of original subjects needed to get the desired amount of valid responses for the present study. In addition, the fact that very few missing data were found in the pretest survey showed that the questionnaire items were clear and easy to answer.

Operational Definitions

The main goal of the survey was to explore whether job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are different concepts. Past research on newspaper reporters showed those factors affecting newspaper reporters' overall job satisfaction include the following 10 work values: autonomy, sense of :hievement, impact on community, personal growth, interesting nature of work, newsroom policy (on whether news quality or ad income should take the priority), pay, job security, promotion opportunities, and work conditions. The synthesis of past research on newspaper reporters' overall job satisfaction showed the group of work values affecting reporters' job satisfaction would include those directly related to their job content: autonomy, sense of achievement, the work itself, impact on the community, personal growth, and interesting nature of work. On the other hand, the group of work values affecting the reporters' job dissatisfaction would include work values directly related to their job environment: pay, job security, promotion opportunities, and work conditions. In addition, the work value of newsroom policy (on whether news quality or ad income should take the priority) could affect satisfaction and dissatisfaction about equally.

Basically, this study attempts to measure whether the 10 work values traditionally found to affect newspaper reporters' job satisfaction can be categorized primarily into two groups, each affecting either job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The 10 work values served as the source of questionnaire items. To gauge the work values, 12 questionnaire items were used.[23] For example, the item "autonomy at work" was used to gauge the work value "autonomy," and "salary and benefits" was used to gauge the work value "pay." For each item, the respondents were asked to respond on a 7-point Likert scale that described the concept. For instance, for "autonomy at work," the respondents were asked to respond on a 7-point scale ranging from "not at all" to "a great deal." For the item "facilities and equipment in newsroom," respondents were asked to respond on a 7-point scale ranging from "not adequate at all" to "very adequate."

The questionnaire measured the respondents' overall job satisfaction by using 70 items revised from the widely applied 72-item job descriptive index (JDI) (Smith et al., 1969), which has five dimensions: work, supervision, pay, promotions and coworkers. Among the five dimensions, satisfaction with work, satisfaction with supervision, and satisfaction with coworkers are more related to job content, so they are likely to be intrinsic and reflect job satisfaction. In contrast, satisfaction with pay and satisfaction with promotions are more related to the job environment, so they are more likely to be extrinsic and reflect job dissatisfaction. In order to more validly measure the intrinsic JDI dimensions (reflecting job satisfaction) and the extrinsic JDI dimensions (reflecting job dissatisfaction), the statistical procedure of structural equation modeling was used (Buckley et al., 1992).

Hypotheses Testing

First of all, we hypothesized that newspaper reporters' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are affected by different groups of factors.

For the two concepts (satisfaction and dissatisfaction) to be affected by different groups of factors, they should be different concepts. To test this, a confirmatory factor analysis was used.

After the JDI items were coded,[24] a confirmatory factor analysis was used to determine whether job satisfaction (extracted from intrinsic dimensions) and dissatisfaction (extracted from extrinsic dimensions) were indeed separate concepts (factors). The procedure was employed to confirm the literature review that indicated the intrinsic dimensions (reflecting job satisfaction) should load on one factor (latent variable) and the extrinsic dimensions (reflecting job dissatisfaction) should load on another.

Secondly, we hypothesized that newspaper reporters' job satisfaction is predicted by motivators, or factors related to job content, such as autonomy, sense of achievement, personal growth, interesting nature of work, and impact on community.

Next, we hypothesized that newspaper reporters' job dissatisfaction is predicted by hygiene factors, or factors related to job environment, such as pay, job security, promotion opportunities, and work conditions.

Finally, we predicted that newsroom policy is a predictor of both newspaper reporters' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Because newsroom policy is hypothesized to affect both job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, we tested it separately in two separate theoretical path (or causal) models.[25] In the first theoretical path model, newsroom policy (on whether news quality or ad income should take the priority) and motivators (autonomy, sense of achievement, personal growth, interesting nature of work, and impact on community) together affect job satisfaction (extracted from the intrinsic dimensions). In the second theoretical path model, job dissatisfaction (extracted by the extrinsic dimensions) is posited to be affected by newsroom policy, and hygiene factors, including pay, job security, promotion opportunities, and work conditions (reflected by questionnaire items: hours and schedules of work, stress from working in the newsroom, and newsroom equipment and facilities).

To measure the two models, the work values were coded based on the questionnaire used. We asked the survey subjects to describe, on a 7-point Likert scale, the 12 questionnaire items [26] measuring the 10 work values--autonomy, sense of achievement, impact on community, personal growth, interesting nature of work, newsroom policy (on whether news quality or ad income should take the priority), pay, job security, promotion opportunities, and work conditions.[27]

Sampling

Following a general rule of thumb that for each parameter estimation there should be five subjects (Bentler & Chou, 1987), only about 70 subjects (five times 14 for the first path model) were needed to accommodate the most complicated path model.[28] Because we obtained a 50 percent response rate in the pretest, the original subject pool had to be at least 140 newspaper reporters. Although 140 reporters would seem sufficient, all available subjects (whose names and addresses were obtained for the study) were used in the original sample pool, because the bigger the sample size, the more stable the structural equation model will be (Hatcher, 1998, p. 200). The original subject pool included all 702 reporters whose names and addresses were obtained via two methods. First, lists of reporters were compiled from all 17 daily newspapers available in the public libraries.[29] Some 614 reporters' names were compiled from bylines appearing in the newspapers.[30] Second, because there are 87 daily newspapers in Texas (Editor & Publisher International Year Book, 1997), the list of 69 other newspapers was obtained from the Editor & Publisher International Year Book. A letter was sent to the editors of the 69 newspapers to invite them to participate in the study. Eleven of the 69 newspapers agreed to participate and provided lists of their reporters, for a total of 88.[31] As a result, the original subject pool (which included the 614 reporter names obtained from newspapers and 88 others provided by newspapers' editors) contained 702 reporters.[32]

Except for five evening newspapers, the majority of the 28 daily newspapers studied were morning newspapers. The circulation distribution patterns of the newspapers were similar to those of U.S. morning newspapers.[33] For this reason, the sample for present study seemed to represent the 686 morning newspapers in the United States.[34] Even though the sample did not represent all newspapers in the United States and did not represent the other 846 evening newspapers in the country,[35] its representation of the morning papers still is very important because morning newspapers usually are more urban and more influential (having greater circulation sizes).[36]

Data Collection

The survey questionnaire, cover letter, and self-addressed, stamped envelope, was mailed to each subject in February and March 1998. With one original mailing and one follow-up,[37] 365 valid responses were collected. Because four among the original 702 subjects either had incorrect addresses or had quit their jobs, the actual sample pool is 698 subjects. Based on this, the response rate exceeds 52 percent,[38] better than the 47 percent average response rate for mail surveys (Wimmer & Domnick, 1994). After the questionnaires were collected, the data were entered in a computer statistical program for analysis.

RESULTS

The sample of 365 newspaper reporters was 60.5% male, 81.6% White, 50.1% married, and 97.5% with at least a college education (82.2% were college graduates and 15.3% had graduate degrees). The median age was 34, the average tenure was 7 years, and the median salary ranged from $30,000 to $34,999.[39] Compared with national samples of American newspaper journalists (Jennings, 1995; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1994), the demographics for the Texas daily newspaper reporters are similar,[40] suggesting that the sample's external validity is reasonably high.

The sample was randomly assigned into two equal-sized sub-samples[41] to test the four theoretical statements. Of the two sub-samples, one served as an analysis sample and the other as a holdout sample, so that the three theoretical models posited in the study could be tested twice to get better evidence about the models' fit. Such cross-validation is recommended for models derived through structural equation modeling (Hatcher, 1998). The cross-validation worked as follows: For each theoretical model, the analysis sample was used to confirm or modify the model.[42] Then, the model derived through the analysis sample was tested in the holdout sample to see if the model still fit and if the parameter estimates were comparable. If the model fit well in both samples and the parameter estimates were stable for both, then there is a better chance that such a model would fit other samples as well (Hatcher, 1998).

Hypothesis One

We predicted that newspaper reporters' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are affected by different groups of factors. For the two concepts (satisfaction and dissatisfaction) to be affected by different groups of factors, they have to be different concepts. To test whether the two concepts are different, we used a confirmatory factor analysis.

But first, the reliability of each of the five JDI dimensions (work, supervision, pay, promotions and coworkers) needed examining to ensure each was a reliable measurement scale (since each dimension consisted of eight to 18 items). By testing the reliability of the five JDI dimensions on the analysis sample,[43] the results showed that the reliability coefficient alpha of each JDI dimension either approximated or exceeded the acceptable minimum level of .80 for well-established measurement scales (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994, p. 265), indicating that each of the five dimensions was a reliable scale.[44]

After the five JDI dimensions were proven to be reliable measurement scales, we used a confirmatory factor analysis to confirm that job satisfaction (extracted from intrinsic dimensions) and dissatisfaction (extracted from extrinsic dimensions) were indeed separate concepts. The procedure also was used to confirm that the intrinsic dimensions load only on one factor (job satisfaction) and the extrinsic dimensions load only on another (job dissatisfaction), as suggested by the literature review.[45]

1. Testing the theoretical factor solution model on the analysis sample

The analysis sample (n = 182) was first tested using the SAS CALIS program (Hatcher, 1998)[46] to examine the fit of the confirmatory factor analysis model. The procedure confirmed the factor model by showing it has good fit.[47]

2. Validating the factor model in the holdout sample

After the fit of the theoretical model was confirmed by testing it on the analysis sample, the model was tested again on the holdout sample (n = 183) to see if it would fit a different sample. The results of testing the model on the holdout sample also supported the model.[48] Since the confirmatory factor analysis model (representing the first theoretical statement) was confirmed in both the analysis and holdout samples, the first hypothesis received ample support. Testing the first hypothesis also revealed the correlation between job satisfaction and dissatisfaction,[49] indicating the possible existence of neutral factors that affect both concepts.

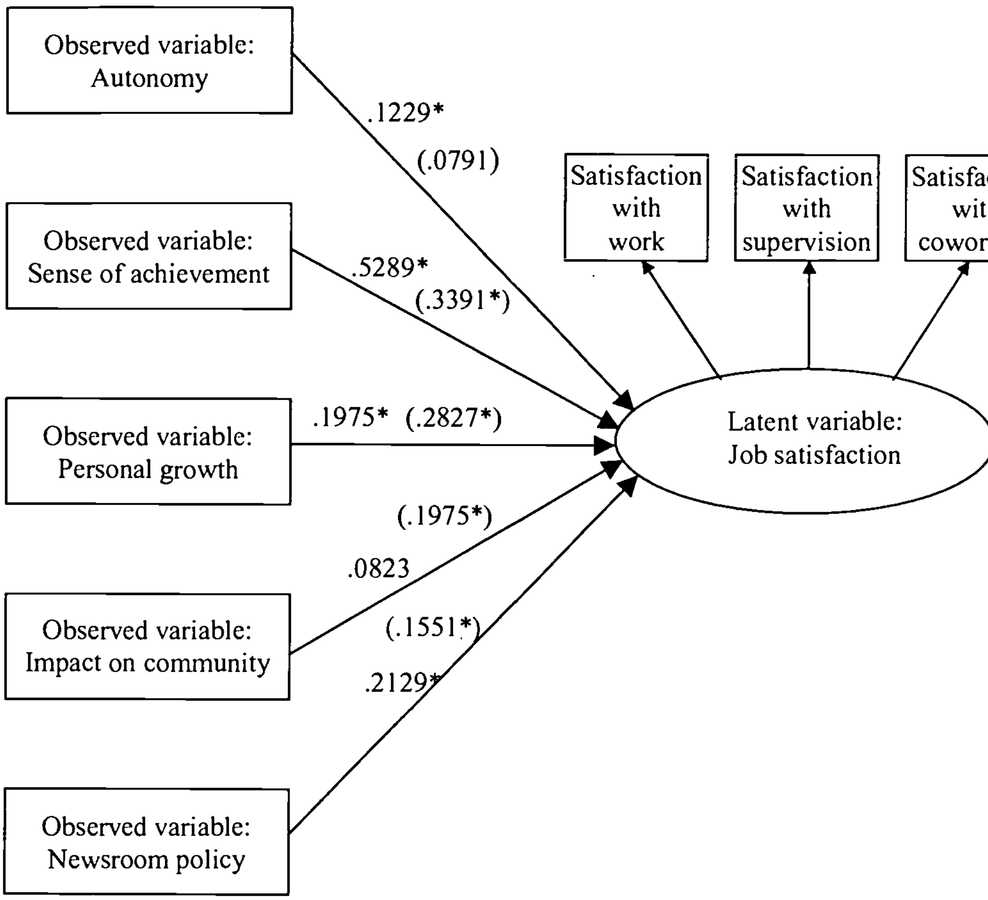
Hypotheses Two, Three and Four

The second hypothesis posits that newspaper reporters' job satisfaction is predicted by motivators, or factors related to job content, such as autonomy, sense of achievement, personal growth, interesting nature of work, and impact on community. The third hypothesis posits that newspaper reporters' job dissatisfaction is predicted by hygiene factors, or factors related to their job environment, such as pay, job security, promotion opportunities, and work conditions. The fourth hypothesis posits that newsroom policy (on whether news quality or ad income should take the priority) is a predictor of both newspaper reporters' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

The three hypotheses were tested in two theoretical path models. In the first model, motivators and newsroom policy serve as independent variables, and the latent variable of job satisfaction serves as the dependent variable. In the second path model, hygiene factors and newsroom policy serve as independent variables and the latent variable job dissatisfaction serves as the dependent variable.

Both theoretical path models were tested using a structural equation modeling procedure executed through the SAS CALIS program (Hatcher, 1998). Each model was first tested on the analysis sample and, after being modified, tested again on the holdout sample for cross-validation.

Figure 1: Revised Path Model 1 with Coefficients of Independent Variables



Note: "*" stands for a statistical significance. The path coefficients not in the parentheses are those obtained from testing the revised model on the analysis sample. The path coefficients in the parentheses are those obtained from testing the model on the holdout sample.

1. Testing and modifying the first theoretical path model

The model was tested first on the analysis sample (n = 182) to determine if autonomy, sense of achievement, personal growth, interesting nature of work, impact on community, and newsroom policy influences job satisfaction. Goodness of fit indices for testing the model on the analysis sample exhibited mixed results.[50]

The mixed results in the fit indices indicated that the theoretical model needs modification. A look at the modification index of the GAMMA matrix revealed that the correlation between "interesting nature of work" and "satisfaction with work," and that between "interesting nature of work" and "satisfaction with supervision" were the two largest unexplained correlations. Because in path model modification it is better not to add a new path but to eliminate an existing path (Hatcher, 1998), the best approach seemed to be dropping the variable "interesting nature of work," a move that also appeared justified because the path coefficient for that variable was statistically insignificant ($t = 1.2237$, p = n.s.[51]).

After "interesting nature of work" was removed from the original theoretical model, the revised model was tested with the analysis sample. The resulting fit indices showed evidence of a good fit for the model.[52]

Exhibiting a good fit in the analysis sample, the revised path model was tested again in the holdout sample ($n = 183$). The resulting fit indices readings all showed signs of a good fit.[53] Since all the fit indices looked good, the revised model was validated in the holdout sample.

2. Examining standardized path coefficients for the first path model

Since testing the revised first path model on both samples produced two standardized path coefficients for each independent variable, the two sets of path coefficients had to be examined to see if they are similar in statistical significance and whether they have positive or negative relationships with the dependent variable.[54] In addition, standardized path coefficients' sizes would indicate the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable (Hatcher, 1998).

The revised path model (see Figure 1) included five independent variables (autonomy, sense of achievement, impact on community, personal growth, and newsroom policy on whether news quality or ad income should take the priority) that affect the dependent variable job satisfaction. Among the five, sense of achievement, personal growth and newsroom policy had statistically significant path coefficients ($p < .05$), whether the model was tested on the analysis sample or on the holdout sample. Among the three independent variables with significant path coefficients for both samples, sense of achievement had the largest path coefficients and appeared to exert the most significant effect on job satisfaction.

Autonomy and impact on community, also included in the model, had significant coefficients ($p < .05$) only for a single sample (instead of both samples).

In sum, in this revised first path model, sense of achievement, personal growth and newsroom policy were confirmed as significant predictors of job satisfaction (dependent variable) in both samples. As hypothesized predictors of the dependent variable, autonomy and impact on community received limited support because each was confirmed as a significant predictor in a single sample (not both). Except for "interesting nature of work," all four other independent variables hypothesized in the second hypothesis (sense of achievement, personal growth, autonomy and impact on community) received a certain degree of support from the samples tested as predictors of the dependent variable job satisfaction. In short, the second hypothesis was basically supported. In addition, the finding that newsroom policy was a significant predictor of job satisfaction only constituted partial support for the fourth hypothesis.

3. Testing and modifying the second theoretical path model

The second theoretical path model was tested first on the analysis sample (n = 182) to determine whether pay, promotion opportunities, job security, hours and schedule of work, job stress, newsroom facilities, and newsroom policy influences job dissatisfaction.[55] Goodness-of-fit indices readings exhibited a lack of a good fit [56], indicating the second theoretical path model also needed modification.

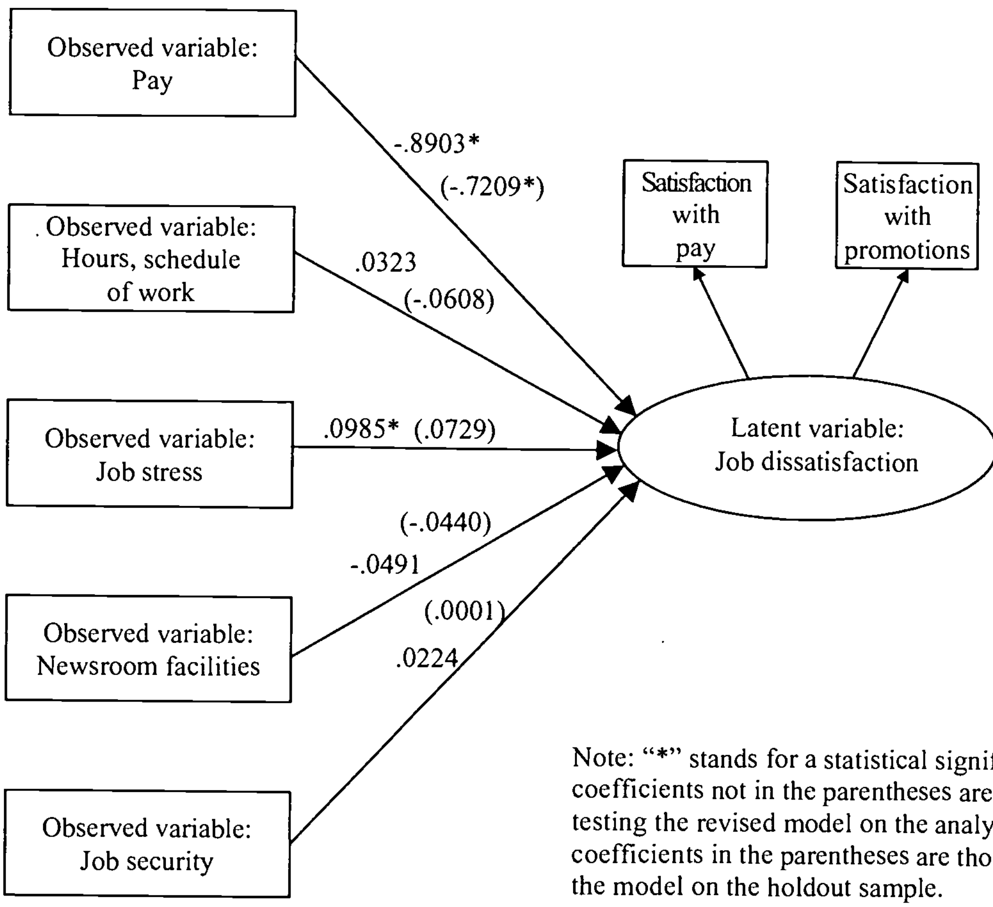
A look at the GAMMA matrix (obtained from testing the theoretical model on the analysis sample) showed the correlation between the variables "promotion opportunities" and "satisfaction with pay," and that between the variables "promotion opportunities" and "satisfaction with promotions" were the two largest unexplained correlations. Because path model modification usually aims at eliminating an existing path (Hatcher, 1998), we dropped "promotion opportunities" from the model, a move seemed justified because "promotion opportunities" did not have a significant path coefficient (t = -.9123, p = n.s.).

The first revised model was tested on the analysis sample to see its goodness of fit. The fit indices showed that the model was improved but problems still existed.[57] The lack of an overall fit for the first revised model showed that the model needed another modification.

A look at the GAMMA matrix (obtained from testing the first revised model) showed that correlation between the variables "newsroom policy" and "satisfaction with pay," and that between the variables "newsroom policy" and "satisfaction with promotions" were the two largest unexplained correlations. Because path model modification aims to eliminate existing path, (Hatcher, 1998), we dropped "newsroom policy" from the model, a move seemed justified because "newsroom policy" was almost statistically insignificant (t = -.1.7878 (one-tailed), the absolute value of which was barely larger than the t-value at p = .05 level).

The fit indices reading from testing second revised model on the analysis sample showed a good fit.[58] The second revised model was then tested again on the holdout sample (n = 183). The resulting fit indices readings also looked good,[59] but the model suffered from a negative error variance when the latent variable of job dissatisfaction was extracted from the observed variable of satisfaction with pay. Since negative error variance cannot exist, a restraint was set on the variance so that it could only be positive and the model was tested again on the holdout sample. The resulting goodness of fit looked good.[60] Therefore, the second revised model was confirmed for the holdout sample.

Figure 2: Revised Path Model 2 with Standardized Path Coefficients



Note: "*" stands for a statistical significance. The path coefficients not in the parentheses are those obtained from testing the revised model on the analysis sample. The path coefficients in the parentheses are those obtained from testing the model on the holdout sample.

4. Examining standardized path coefficients for second path model

Because the second revised path model was confirmed in both the analysis sample and holdout samples[61], it is important also to examine standardized path coefficients for the independent variables in the revised model to see if they are similar in their statistical significance and positive/negative signs (which indicate positive/negative links with the dependent variable). In addition, standardized path coefficients should be examined because their sizes indicate the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable (Hatcher, 1998).

The revised path model (see Figure 2) has five independent variables (pay, job security, hours and schedule of work, job stress, and newsroom facilities) that affect the dependent variable job satisfaction. Among the five, pay and job stress had statistically significant path coefficients ($p < .05$) for at least one of the two samples tested. Of the two, pay was more important, having path coefficients with larger absolute values. Moreover, pay, with negative coefficients for both samples, had a negative relationship with the dependent variable job dissatisfaction, while job stress, with positive coefficients, had a positive relationship with job dissatisfaction. Overall, judging by their statistical significance, job security, hours and schedule of work, and newsroom facilities were not good predictors of job dissatisfaction.

In sum, testing the second revised path model in the analysis sample and the holdout sample showed pay and job stress were important predictors of job dissatisfaction, while job security, hours and schedule of work, and newsroom equipment were not. In addition, since the work value of work conditions was reflected by job stress, hours and schedule of work, and newsroom facilities, the fact that job stress was a good predictor of job dissatisfaction provided some support that work conditions was a good predictor of job dissatisfaction. Overall, among the four hygiene factors posited in the third hypothesis to affect job dissatisfaction--pay, job security, promotion opportunities, and work conditions--only pay and work conditions were good predictors of job dissatisfaction. Therefore, the third hypothesis received mixed support. In addition, newsroom policy--though a good predictor of job satisfaction--was not found to be a significant predictor of job dissatisfaction. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis also received mixed support.

DISCUSSION

The results have several direct implications. First, knowing that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are distinct concepts, as Herzberg held, suggests future researchers of job satisfaction should measure job dissatisfaction on a different scale from job satisfaction, instead of following the traditional path of treating both concepts as different ends of the same continuum. The distinction between job satisfaction and dissatisfaction also is important to newspaper managers. Treating the two concepts separately would help managers to better identify reasons for job satisfaction to motivate reporters to high performance, and to better identify reasons for job dissatisfaction to help lower turnover rate. Also, the finding about the correlation between job satisfaction and dissatisfaction supports the theoretical notion that some factors may affect job satisfaction and dissatisfaction about equally. Such "neutral factors" may be important because they are useful to managers. Suppose, for example, newsroom policy (on whether news quality or ad income should take the priority) equally contributes to reporters' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. A newspaper manager ignoring this likelihood may make policy that lead to low satisfaction or high dissatisfaction.

Second, confirming that sense of achievement, personal growth, newsroom policy, autonomy, and impact on community are important positive predictors of job satisfaction yields many intriguing possibilities. Interestingly, sense of achievement had the highest path coefficient of all five predictors, meaning it appears to have the greatest influence on job satisfaction--more influential than autonomy and personal growth. Previous studies showed autonomy as an important factor behind how newspaper journalists rated their jobs (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1994), but also showed that newspaper reporters need achievement (Chusmir, 1984) and like personal achievement most about their jobs (Tharp, 1991). As writing news stories and having them published is a short-term process, reporters probably like to see quick results from their work. Since personal growth often takes time, reporters may find it less desirable than the daily sense of achievement. The finding that sense of achievement is the most important predictor of reporter job satisfaction also is intriguing because past national surveys on journalists repeatedly indicated autonomy to be a major factor behind journalist job satisfaction, while overlooking sense of achievement (Pollard, 1995; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1994, 1996). A possible explanation may come from the belief that, as professionals, journalists should have and value autonomy (Pollard, 1995). On the other hand, newspaper reporters care a lot about their writing (Olson, 1989), need achievement (Chusmir, 1984), and believe personal achievement (from writing good stories) is their strongest like about their jobs (Tharp, 1991). Apparently, sense of achievement as a factor behind reporters' satisfaction is worth more research attention than it receives.

Third, the finding that pay and work conditions (as reflected by the variable job stress) are key predictors of job dissatisfaction is interesting because of the different positive/negative signs of the two variables' path coefficients. Because pay has a negative coefficient and job stress has a positive one, this means (1) the higher the pay, the lower the job dissatisfaction and (2) the higher the job stress, the higher the job dissatisfaction. Both findings makes inherent sense and are consistent with earlier research (Fedler, Buhr & Taylor, 1988). In addition, the finding that pay is by far the most important predictor also is consistent with past findings (Tharp, 1991; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1994, 1996).

Fourth, while the study supports Herzberg's theory (that job satisfaction is affected by motivators and job dissatisfaction is influenced by hygiene factors), factors found to affect job satisfaction--sense of achievement, newsroom policy, autonomy, and impact on community--also directly relate to media content. For example, reporters have the reputation of being eager to crusade. For some reporters, having a high sense of achievement means they need to write such stories. Relatedly, reporters with high autonomy might also use it to write crusading stories. Another motivator, newsroom policy, when with a strong emphasis on news quality, also may affect media content by improving its quality. Likewise, impact on community also could affect content because a community-conscious reporter would write more stories catering to readers' needs.

Fifth--and probably most important--because job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are different concepts, a reporter could be satisfied and dissatisfied at the same time. A reporter dissatisfied because of, say, pay and work conditions but satisfied because of a sense of achievement and personal growth might still produce good-quality news stories. Taking care of reporters' job dissatisfaction is important, but it is insufficient to motivate them to be productive. As job satisfaction has been found to motivate better job performance (Cranny, Smith & Stone, 1992), newsroom managers need to pay attention to factors behind reporter satisfaction. This study showed that the leading predictor of reporter satisfaction is sense of achievement, followed by (in order of their importance) personal growth, newsroom policy, impact on community, and autonomy. Based on the findings, newsroom managers need to pay most attention to reporters' sense of achievement, which can motivate reporters most effectively.

While having several implications, the findings are also limited. One limitation involved the measurement of the neutral factor newsroom policy. Although it was more appropriate to use two items to measure the factor, only a single item was used. As a result, the influence of newsroom policy on reporter job dissatisfaction was not identified. Another limitation concerned the sample size. Although the sizes of the two sub-samples were adequate, a larger sample could lead to the estimation of an even more stable model. Finally, the fit of the tested models in the data does not rule out the possibility that alternative models also may fit the data well. Because of this, the development of the original theoretical model (for testing in the data) is crucial and should be based on both theory and empirical evidence.

Despite such limitations, this study may have provided stronger support for Herzberg's theory than past studies that confirm the theory on the basis of subjects' self-reports (Cohen, 1974; Schawartz et al., 1963; Shaver, 1978), exploratory factor analysis (Knoop, 1994), or regression analysis (Iiacqua et al., 1995). Besides providing better evidence to confirm Herzberg's theory, another strength of the present study is that it may have marked the first attempt to test and confirm the theory in the context of newspaper reporters. The confirmation suggests that researchers and newsroom managers should pay more attention to the different factors behind satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The present research also may have greater generalizability than other research on journalists' job satisfaction that relied on the subjects' self-reports to determine the link between the factors and job satisfaction (Bergen & Weaver, 1988; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1994, 1996). Since such self-reported data constitute descriptive statistics, the models derived from the present study using inferential statistics (i.e. structural equation modeling) seem to stand a better chance of generalizability to the population of newspaper reporters. What's even more interesting is that the models derived from past research on journalists' job satisfaction are largely confirmed in this study.

In summary, then, "satisfaction" of reporters is more complex than communication scholars have previously indicated. More work needs to be done to explore the satisfaction-performance link as well as the dissatisfaction-turnover connection. And managers need to use this new-found complexity to explore new ways to motivate reporters through appropriate intrinsic and extrinsic factors to achieve strategic--and happier--ends.

Notes:

[1] Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) found in a survey that autonomy was the leading reason cited as affecting satisfaction of newsworkers in newspapers, wire services, news magazines, and television and radio stations. About 25 percent of the 1,156 respondents cited autonomy as the top reason affecting their satisfaction, rather than dissatisfaction. In a poll of U.S. and Canadian journalists, Pollard (1995) also found staffers' autonomy related to their overall job satisfaction. Likewise, In Weaver and Wilhoit's (1994) poll of 636 newspaper journalists, autonomy was a major reason affecting how the journalists rated their jobs, cited by 52.9 percent of the respondents. Also, from surveys on U.S. and Canadian newspaper journalists, Joseph (1981, 1982a, 1982b, 1982c) found reporters wanted more decision-making power (or autonomy).

[2] In his study using journalists' occupational orientation codes created by the U.S. Department of Labor, Chusmir (1984) concluded that by raising reporters' sense of achievement, their overall job satisfaction would increase. Also, in Tharp's (1991) national poll of 600 small-daily newspaper reporters, personal achievement was cited as the reporters' strongest like (rather than dislike) about their jobs, cited by 23 percent of the subjects. Such a result suggests that the reporters' sense of achievement affects their job happiness rather than their unhappiness.

[3] In Tharp's (1991) national poll on newspaper reporters, personal growth was found as the reporters' second strongest like (rather than dislike) about their jobs, cited by 22 percent of the subjects. Similarly, in Weaver and Wilhoit's (1994) national poll, the chance to develop a specialty was found as a major factor in how journalists rate their jobs, cited by 43.7 percent of the respondents.

[4] Tharp's (1991) national poll of newspaper reporters also found the work itself as one of the reporters' strongest likes (rather than dislikes) about their jobs, cited by 19 percent of the subjects. Also, a national poll of journalists showed interesting nature of work was the second most important factor affecting the job satisfaction of newsworkers in newspapers, wire services, news magazines, and televisions and radio stations (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996).

[5] Chusmir (1984) concluded that newspaper reporters are the types of persons who seek information that could influence the lives of others. Also, a national survey of journalists showed impact on community was a major factor affecting newsworkers' job satisfaction (rather than their dissatisfaction) (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). Likewise, from a re-analysis of a national poll of 470 newspaper journalists, Bergen and Weaver (1988) found that the newspaper's performance in informing the public is a factor affecting the journalists' overall job satisfaction.

[6] From their national survey, Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) found salary is one of the two most important factors affecting job dissatisfaction (rather than satisfaction) of newsworkers in newspapers, wire services, news magazines, televisions and radios, cited by 50 percent of the respondents (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). Also, Weaver and Wilhoit (1994) found that pay is a major factor affecting how newspaper journalists rate their jobs, cited by 21.4 percent of the subjects. Likewise, Tharp (1991) found in a poll of reporters that one of the reporters' top two dislikes (rather than likes) about their jobs is salary, cited by 28 percent of the respondents.

[7] In his national survey of small newspaper reporters, Tharp (1991) found "work load" and "work conditions" to be one of the two strongest dislikes (rather than likes) of the reporters about their jobs, cited by 28 percent of the respondents. Also in the same survey, internal pressure was found to be a major reason the reporters dislike their jobs, cited by 21 percent of the respondents. On the

other hand, Weaver & Wilhoit's (1996) national survey found that work conditions is a weak factor affecting the job satisfaction journalists of all types, cited by only 5 percent of the respondents.

[8] Promotion opportunities were found in a national survey to be a major factor affecting the job dissatisfaction (rather than satisfaction) of journalists in newspapers, wire services, news magazines, televisions and radios, cited by about one-fifth of the 1,156 respondents (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). Another national survey also found promotion opportunities to be a major factor affecting how newspaper journalists rate their jobs, cited by 35.5 percent of the respondents (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1994).

[9] Judging from past research, it is unclear whether job security affects newspaper reporters' satisfaction or dissatisfaction. From a 1992 poll on newspaper journalists, job security was found to be a key factor affecting how newspaper journalists rate their jobs, cited by 62 percent of the respondents (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1994). However, another recent national poll showed that job security is a weak factor affecting job satisfaction of newsworkers in newspaper, wire services, news magazines, and television and radio stations, cited by only 5 percent of the respondents (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). Although it is unclear whether job security affects the reporters' satisfaction or dissatisfaction, it is clearly an extrinsic work value--as it is related more to the work environment (rather than the job content). According to Herzberg's theory, such a work value should influence the reporters' job dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al. 1959; Herzberg, 1968, 1987).

[10] Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) found management policy is one of the two most important factors affecting job dissatisfaction (rather than satisfaction) of newsworkers in newspapers, wire services, news magazines, and television and radio stations, cited by 50 percent of the respondents. Bergen and Weaver (1988) found that the newsroom policy is a major factor affecting newspaper journalists' overall job satisfaction. Weaver and Wilhoit (1994) also found that editorial policy is the most important factor affecting how newspaper journalists rate their jobs, cited by 66.8 percent of the respondents. In addition, from a poll of 429 newspaper journalists, Stamm and Underwood (1993) found that journalists' overall job satisfaction rises when the policy results in news quality improvement. Their overall satisfaction declines (i.e., their dissatisfaction will increase) if, after a policy change, professional autonomy takes a back seat to business concerns. In other words, newsroom policy may contribute to the journalists' job satisfaction if it improves quality but may contribute to job dissatisfaction if it emphasizes business concerns. These studies suggest that newsroom policy is likely to affect newspaper reporters' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction about equally. When newsroom policy focuses on news quality, it relates to job content (daily work) and should affect job satisfaction. On the other hand, when newsroom policy favors advertising revenues, it relates more to the environment under which the job is carried out, and should affect job dissatisfaction.

[11] Because the possible existence of neutral work values that affect the two concepts (job satisfaction and dissatisfaction) about equally, the two are, however, somewhat correlated.

[12] Newsroom policy (on whether news quality or ad income should take the priority) is related both to the job content (news quality) and to job environment (ad income) because (1) newsroom policy may focus on news quality, which is related to the reporters' daily assignments (job content), and (2) newsroom policy also may emphasize advertising revenue, which is more related to newspaper profitability (job environment) than to the daily assignments (job content). Therefore, it can be both a motivator and hygiene factor.

[13] According to Editor & Publisher International Year Book (1997), the circulation makeup of Texas newspapers is similar to that of the United States. For example, about 0.5 percent of U.S. daily newspapers belong to the circulation category of more than 500,000, similar to the 2.3 percent ratio in Texas. For the 250,001-500,000 circulation category, the similarity is striking--2.1 percent of U.S. dailies fall under the category, compared with 2.3 percent of dailies in Texas.

[14] According to the self-reports by pretest respondents, factors affecting the reporters' job satisfaction, or "motivators," were primarily work-related (e.g., sense of achievement, interesting nature of work, the chance to learn a great deal, and the chance to help readers). In contrast, factors affecting the reporters' job dissatisfaction, or "hygiene factors," were primarily related to the job environment (e.g., newsroom facilities, job security, and pay). In addition, newsroom policy (on whether news quality or ad income should take the priority) was found to affect job satisfaction and dissatisfaction about equally.

[15] According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), the reliability coefficient alpha reading was better than expected since the reliability for a hypothesized measure of a construct (in this case, the scale is composed by motivators) is considered satisfactory if the coefficient is .70 or higher.

[16] Among the five JDI dimensions (satisfaction with work, satisfaction with supervision, satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with promotions, and satisfaction with coworkers), satisfaction with work, satisfaction with supervision and satisfaction with coworkers contain items most directly related to daily work. For example, almost every item under the dimension of satisfaction with work (such as "fascinating," "endless," "routine," and "challenging") is directly related to daily work. Likewise, most items under the dimension of satisfaction with supervision are also directly related to daily work (such as "tells me where I stand," "up-to-date," "knows my job well," and "praises good work"). Similarly, the majority of the items under the dimension of satisfaction with coworkers (such as "stimulating," "responsible," "fast," and "loyal") are also daily work-related. Because these dimensions relate closely to daily work, they are considered intrinsic dimensions of overall job satisfaction and, according to Herzberg's theory (Herzberg et al., 1959, Herzberg' 1968, 1987), should be closely related to job satisfaction.

[17] Among the five JDI dimensions, satisfaction with pay and satisfaction with promotions are not related to daily work, but rather the work environment. For example, items under satisfaction with pay are directly related to the financial rewards given in the work environment (such as "underpaid," "highly paid," "adequate for normal expenses," and "barely live on income"). Similarly, items under satisfaction with promotions are related to the reward of higher job status found in the job environment (such as "good opportunities for advancement," "dead-end job," "good chance for promotion," and "opportunities somewhat limited"). Because these dimensions relate closely to the work environment, they are considered extrinsic dimensions of overall job satisfaction and, according to Herzberg's theory (Herzerg et al. 1959; Herzberg, 1968, 1987), should be closely related to job dissatisfaction.

[18] Among the five JDI dimensions (satisfaction with work, satisfaction with supervison, satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with promotions, and satisfaction with coworkers), satisfaction with work, satisfaction with supervision and satisfaction with coworkers contain items most directly related to the daily work. For example, almost every item under the dimension of satisfaction with work (such as "fascinating," "endless," "routine," and "challenging") is directly related to the daily work. Likewise, most items under the dimension of satisfaction with supervision are also directly related to the daily work (such as "tells me where I stand," "up-to-date," "knows my job well," and "praises good work"). Similarly, the majority of the items under the dimension of

satisfaction with coworkers (such as "stimulating," "responsible," "fast," and "loyal") are also daily work-related. Because these dimensions relate closely to the daily work, they are considered intrinsic dimensions of the overall job satisfaction and, according to Herzberg's theory (Herzberg et al., 1959; Herzberg, 1968, 1987), should be closely related to job satisfaction.

[19] According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), the reliability coefficient alpha reading was roughly appropriate since the reliability for a hypothesized measure of a construct (in this case, the scale was composed by hygiene factors) is considered satisfactory if the coefficient is .70 or higher.

[20] Among the five JDI dimensions, satisfaction with pay and satisfaction with promotions are not related with daily work, but rather the work environment. For example, items under satisfaction with pay are directly related to the financial rewards given in the work environment (such as "underpaid," "highly paid," "adequate for normal expenses," and "barely live on income"). Similarly, items under satisfaction with promotions are related to the reward of higher job status found in the job environment (such as "good opportunities for advancement," "dead-end job," "good chance for promotion," and "opportunities somewhat limited"). Because these dimensions relate closely to the work environment, they are considered extrinsic dimensions of the overall job satisfaction and, according to Herzberg's theory, should be closely related to job dissatisfaction.

[21] The realiability alpha readings were .90 for motivators as a whole and .66 for hygiene factors as a whole. The readings were acceptable because they wer either higher than the .70 acceptable level or close to that level. The reliability for a hypothesized measure of a construct is considered satisfactory if the coefficient is .70 or higher (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

[22] The reliability coefficient alpha readings were .90 for satisfaction with work, .95 for satisfaction with supervision, .76 for satisfaction with pay, .86 for satisfaction with promotions, and .92 for satisfaction with coworkers. According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), it can be argued that for well-established measurement scales, increasing reliability much beyond a reliability coefficient alpha reading of .80 is often unnecessary.

[23] The 12 questionnaire items (or the 12 variables used in the statistical analysis of the data collected from the present study) include autonomy at work, salary and benefits, job security, feeling of accomplishment from work, the extent to which my job is interesting, chance of advancement in the paper, opportunities to influence readers, opportunities to learn a great deal, hours and schedule of work, stress from working in newsroom, newsroom policy, facilities and equipment in newsroom, and the extent to which my job is challenging. The 12 items with the work values they represent in the parentheses are as follows: autonomy at work (autonomy); salary and benefits (pay); job security (job security); feeling of accomplishment in the paper (sense of achievement); the extent to which my job is interesting (interesting nature of work); chance of advancement (promotion opportunities); opportunities to influence readers (impact on the community); opportunities to learn a great deal (personal growth); newsroom policy (newsroom policy); hours and schedule of work (work conditions); facilities and equipment in newsroom (work conditions); stress from working in newsroom (work conditions).

[24] For each item, a score of 3 was assigned to a "yes" response to a positive item (such as "fascinating" under the dimension of "satisfaction with work") and to a "no" to a negative item (e.g., "less than I deserve" under the dimension of "satisfaction with pay"). In other words, a score of 3 to any single item indicated "satisfaction" (for items in the intrinsic JDI dimensions) or "lack of dissatisfaction" (for items in the extrinsic JDI dimensions). On the other hand, a score of 0 was assigned to a "no" response to a positive item (e.g., "ask my advice" under "satisfaction with

supervision") or to a "yes" to a negative item (e.g., "boring" under "satisfaction with coworkers"). Therefore, a score of 0 indicated "lack of satisfaction" (for items in the intrinsic dimensions) or "dissatisfaction" (for items in the extrinsic dimensions). In addition, a score of 1 was assigned to an "unsure" response to any item. The scoring scheme followed empirically tested guidelines proposed by Smith, Kendall and Hulin (1969). For the present study, an unsure response to an intrinsic-dimension item is more indicative of "lack of satisfaction" than "satisfaction." Similarly, an unsure response to an extrinsic-dimension item is more indicative of "dissatisfaction" than "lack of dissatisfaction."

[25] Path models may be referred to as causal models (Hatcher, 1998). The models will be tested using path analysis under the statistical procedure of structural equation modeling, which would improve the validity of the JDI items (Buckley et al., 1992). Another advantage to using structural equation modeling is that the procedure tests all paths (relationships between variables) simultaneously and estimates the errors at the same time (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996) (source: Schumacker, R. E., & Lomax, R. G. (1996). *A Beginner's Guide to Structural Equation Modeling.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers).

[26] The 12 questionnaire items (or the 12 variables used in the analysis of the data collected from the present study) are autonomy at work, salary and benefits, job security, feeling of accomplishment from work, the extent to which my job is interesting, chance of advancement in the paper, opportunities to influence readers, opportunities to learn a great deal, hours and schedule of work, stress from working in newsroom, newsroom policy, facilities and equipment in newsroom, and the extent to which my job is challenging. The 12 items with the work values they represent in the parentheses are as follows: autonomy at work (autonomy); salary and benefits (pay); job security (job security); feeling of accomplishment in the paper (sense of achievement); the extent to which my job is interesting (interesting nature of work); chance of advancement (promotion opportunities); opportunities to influence readers (impact on the community); opportunities to learn a great deal (personal growth); newsroom policy (newsroom policy); hours and schedule of work (work conditions); facilities and equipment in newsroom (work conditions); and stress from working in newsroom (work conditions).
After the data were collected, each of the 12 items was assigned a value. Specifically, each response was assigned a value ranging from 0 to 6. The seven continuous integers were chosen to correspond to the original 7-point scale. Except for questionnaire item of newsroom policy, the value of 0 was used to indicate zero salience of a specific questionnaire item (e.g., autonomy at work). In contrast, the value of 6 was used to indicate full-blown salience of a questionnaire item (e.g., job security). For the questionnaire item of newsroom policy, the value of 0 was used to indicate great policy emphasis on business concerns while the value of 6 was used to indicate great policy emphasis on news quality.

[27] Single items (instead of multiple items) were used to measure most of the 10 work values. There are two reasons for such treatment:
(1) Single items have been used to gauge factors behind job satisfaction in past survey research on newspaper journalists' job satisfaction (Bergen & Weaver, 1988; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996);
(2) Using multiple items would make the number of questionnaire items too large (the first two parts of the questionnaire already contains 82 items, see appendices 1 and 2), thus reducing the response rate.
For more information on the questionnaire design, contact the authors.

[28] The sample used here is related to the number of parameters estimated in each of the three models (one confirmatory factor analysis model and two path analysis models) (Bentler & Chou,

1987). In the confirmatory factor analysis, there are five observed variables (five JDI dimensions), two latent variables (or factors), five error terms (for extracting factors from each observed variable), and one correlation (see endnote No. 11) between the two latent variables (or factors), a total of 13 parameters to estimate. For the first path model, there are nine observed variables (five motivators, newsroom policy, and three intrinsic JDI dimensions), one latent variable and four error terms (three errors from extracting a factor from three observed variables--satisfaction with work, satisfaction with supervision and satisfaction with coworkers--and one error from the path equation using six observed variables as predictors of the latent variable), a total of 14 parameters to be estimated. Following the same rationale as that for the first path model, the second path model requires 13 parameters to be estimated.

[29] To protect the anonymity of the survey respondents as promised in the cover letter, the names of the 17 newspapers found in the public libraries are not disclosed here.

[30] All reporters' names were collected from a week's worth of newspapers for each newspaper to ensure that almost every reporter's name for each newspaper was collected. The time of name collection was in late December 1997 and January 1998, just before the survey started. The timing was intended to ensure that the reporters' names collected from the newspapers were current.

[31] To protect the anonymity of survey respondents, the names of the 11 newspapers whose editors agreed to participate in the present study are not revealed here.

[32] This study merges reporters obtained from the two sampling methods into one sample because their demographics (as obtained from those responding to the survey) were mostly comparable (except for median income). Some 365 subjects completed every item of the survey. Among the 365 subjects, 320 were collected through the first sampling method while 45 were collected through the 2nd sampling method.

[33] According to Editor & Publisher International Year Book (1997), circulation distribution patterns of the sampled 28 Texas daily newspapers for the present study are similar to that of all 686 morning newspapers in the United States. For example, 7.1 percent of the dailies in the sample belong to the circulation category of 250,001-500,000, compared to the 4.7 percent ratio for the U.S. morning papers. A striking similarity occurs at the 50,001-100,000 circulation category, where the difference between the ratio for the sample and that for the U.S. morning papers is only 0.4 of a percentage point. Except for the circulation categories of 10,001-25,000 and 25,001-50,000 (where the difference in the ratio is at most 7.6 percentage points), the difference in the ratios for the sample and U.S. morning newspapers is less than 5 percentage points.

[34] According to the Editor & Publisher International Year Book (1997), there are a total of 686 morning newspapers in the United States.

[35] According to the Editor & Publisher International Year Book (1997), there are 1,520 daily newspapers (including both morning and evening dailies) and 846 evening newspapers in the United States.

[36] According to the Editor & Publisher International Year Book (1997), morning papers tend to be more urban than afternoon papers. Morning papers concentrate in areas with larger populations, while afternoon papers concentrate in areas with smaller populations. Also, according to the year book, morning papers usually have larger circulation sizes than afternoon papers.

[37] Each of the mailed questionnaires left out the subject's name, title, or name of the newspaper where he or she worked. The only identification on the questionnaire was a number, which was used only for identifying non-responding subjects for a follow-up mail only.

[38] If responses with missing data are included, there were 448 responses, making the response rate 64 percent.

[39] For more information on gender, ethnicity, marital status, educational backgrounds, and income levels, please contact the authors.

[40] The demographics of the Texas reporters sampled in this study are very comparable to national samples of American newspaper journalists in terms of gender, ethnicity, education, age, and salary, as the following table shows:

Demographic categories		National sample	Texas sample
Gender	Male	66.1%	60.5%
	Female	33.9%	39.5%
Ethnicity	White	89.1%*	81.6%
	Non-white	10.1%*	18.4%
Education	College graduates**	84.3%	97.5%
	Non-college graduates	15.7%	2.5%
Others	Median age	37	34
	Median salary	35,000	30,000-34,999

* Except for the figures for ethnicity, statistics in all other demographic categories for the national sample come from Weaver and Wilhoit's 1992 national survey (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1994). The figures for ethnicity for the national sample comes from a 1994 survey conducted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors (Jennings, 1995).
** College graduates refer to those with at least a bachelor's degree.

[41] One sub-sample contains 182 subjects while the other contains 183 subjects.

[42] Because Herzberg's theory had not been tested on newspaper reporters and the theoretical models tested for the present study were not yet a well-developed model, we modified the hypothesized theoretical models to derive a better model (based on the analysis sample). The model modification, if there is any, will be further justified through testing the revised model on the holdout sample.

[43] The reliability analysis was only performed on the analysis sample because it was the sample where the reliability of the measurement should be established before the start of statistical analysis. The second sample served as holdout sample merely to confirm or disconfirm the model derived from the analysis sample but not used to estimate the reliability of the measurement scales.

[44] The readings for reliability coefficients alpha were .81 for the intrinsic dimension of satisfaction with work, .88 for the intrinsic dimension of satisfaction with supervision, .86 for the intrinsic dimensions of satisfaction with coworkers, .79 for the extrinsic dimensions of satisfaction with pay, and .90 for the extrinsic dimensions with promotions.

[45] The confirmatory factor analysis requires the researcher to pre-determine which factor loadings are zero (McDonald, 1985). Because a variable will only have zero loading on a factor if the variable is totally not loaded on that factor (McDonald, 1985), it is clear that "satisfaction with work," "satisfaction with supervision," and "satisfaction with coworkers" were hypothesized to load only on Factor 1 (job satisfaction) and to have zero loadings on Factor 2 (job dissatisfaction) (source: McDonald, R. P. (1985). *Factor Analysis and Related Methods*. Hillsdale, N.J. : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates). In contrast, "satisfaction with pay" and "satisfaction with promotions" were hypothesized to load only on Factor 2 and to have zero loadings on Factor 1.

[46] The CALIS program of the SAS package is designed to perform confirmatory factor analysis and path analysis, both structural equation modeling techniques (Hatcher, 1998).

[47] The fit index readings were good for both the analysis sample (n = 182) and the holdout sample (n = 183), showing that the model fits both samples. The GFI, AGFI and NFI readings were all above the .90 required fit level for good fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996) (source: Schumacker, R. E., & Lomax, R. G. (1996). *A Beginner's Guide to Structural Equation Modeling*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers). In addition, the Chi-square statistics were insignificant for both samples, another sign of good fit because these figures show the model built from the data is not different from the theoretical model (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996). Also, the average absolute residuals from testing the two samples were both small, indicating the success of the factor solutions (McDonald, 1985) (source: McDonald, R. P. (1985). *Factor Analysis and Related Methods*. Hillsdale, N.J. : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates). The following table shows the fit criteria readings:

Table: Fit Criteria Readings of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Fit criteria	Analysis sample	Holdout sample
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	.9878	.9967
GFI Adjusted for Degree of Freedom (AGFI)	.9544	.9875
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	.9611	.9835
Chi-square probability	.2120	.8158
Average Absolute Residual	.02005	.01172

[48] See endnote No. 47.

[49] The factor-loading structures obtained from both samples clearly indicated that "satisfaction with work," "satisfaction with supervision," and "satisfaction with coworkers" loaded only on Factor 1 (job satisfaction) while "satisfaction with pay" and "satisfaction with promotions" loaded only on Factor 2 (job dissatisfaction). The following table shows the factor loading structures obtained from analysis and holdout samples (see next page):

Table: Factor-Loading Structure (Analysis Sample vs. Holdout Sample)

Observed Variables	Factor loading	
	Factor 1 (Job satisfaction)	Factor 2 (Job dissatisfaction)
Satisfaction with work	.7001 (.6918)	0 (0)
Satisfaction with supervision	.7253 (.6038)	0 (0)
Satisfaction with coworkers	.3617 (.4501)	0 (0)
Satisfaction with pay	0 (0)	.2775 (.3011)
Satisfaction with promotions	0 (0)	.8893 (.5474)

Correlation between factors = .7272 (analysis sample) / .8236 (holdout sample)

Note: n = 182 (analysis sample); n = 183 (holdout sample). Loadings not in the parentheses were loadings obtained from testing the model in the analysis sample, while loadings in the parentheses were obtained from testing the model on the holdout sample.

[50] The fit indices showed mixed results for testing the first theoretical model on the analysis sample. Although the GFI, AGFI and NFI readings are either higher than or nearing the .90 required level of good fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996), a significant Chi-square showed the model's a poor fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996) (source: Schumacker, R. E., & Lomax, R. G. (1996). *A Beginner's Guide to Structural Equation Modeling*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers). The fit indices revealed that the revised model is better than the original theoretical model. Compared with the GFI, AGFI and NFI readings from testing the theoretical model, the readings from testing the revised model on both the analysis and holdout samples were higher and all exceeded the .90 minimum level of good fit. Also, while the Chi-square probability level from testing the theoretical model was significant, the probability levels from testing the modified model on both samples were insignificant. The insignificant Chi-square indicated the model estimated from the data was not significantly different from the revised model. The following table shows the results of testing the theoretical model and the revised model:

Table: Fit Criteria Readings (Theoretical Model 1 vs. Revised Model)

Model	Sample	GFI	AGFI	NFI	χ^2 (p)
Theoretical model	Analysis sample	.9656	.8708	.9428	.0028
Revised model	Analysis sample	.9781	.9213	.9527	.0876
	Holdout sample	.9811	.9318	.9506	.1245

Note: n = 182 (analysis sample); n = 183 (holdout sample). GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; AGFI = GFI Adjusted for Degrees of Freedom; NFI = Normed-Fit Index; χ^2(p) = Chi-square probability level.

[51] "n.s." stands for a statistically insignificant probability level.

[52] See endnote No. 50.

[53] See endnote No. 50.

[54] Since path coefficients represent the size of the effect a given independent variable has on a dependent variable (Hatcher, 1998), the negative/positive sign in front of the coefficient indicates the positive/negative relationship the independent variable has with the dependent variable.

[55] When the latent variable "job dissatisfaction" was extracted from the manifest variables of "satisfaction with pay" and "satisfaction with promotions," the relationships between the latent variable and manifest variables were prescribed as negative in the second path model. For example, the factor (latent variable) extraction part of the path model looked as follows:

V1 = - L1 F1 + E1
V2 = - L2 F1 + E2
where
V1 = satisfaction with pay;
V2 = satisfaction with promotions;
F1 = job dissatisfaction;
L1, L2 = factor loadings;
E1, E2 = error terms from factor extraction.
(Note: The negative signs before L1 and L2 indicate negative relationships between F1 and V1 and between F1 and V2.)

The prescription of negative relationships was intended to recode the latent variable so that it represented "dissatisfaction," rather than "satisfaction." The original manifest (observed) variables ("satisfaction with pay" and "satisfaction with promotions") were composite variables formed by items scored on a 0-to-3 scale, with 0 indicating "dissatisfaction" and 3 indicating "lack of dissatisfaction." If the latent variable was to represent job dissatisfaction, the original manifest variables needed to be recoded so that 0 would represent "lack of dissatisfaction" and 3 would stand for "dissatisfaction." Instead of recoding each of the 17 items constituting the two original composite (manifest) variables of "satisfaction with pay" and "satisfaction with promotions," the author simply prescribed negative relationships between the manifest variables and the latent variables (of "job dissatisfaction"). Such prescription of negative relationship is equivalent to recoding the manifest variables before extracting job dissatisfaction from them.

[56] The fit indices readings showed that the original second theoretical path model lacked a good fit. All of the GFI, AGFI and NFI readings were lower than the required .90 level of good fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996), while a significant Chi-square also indicated a lack of fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996) (source: Schumacker, R. E., & Lomax, R. G. (1996). *A Beginner's Guide to Structural Equation Modeling*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers). The first revised model showed an improvement of the fit, with the GFI and NFI exceeding .90 level, but the AGFI reading was still low and the Chi-square was still significant. Unlike the original model and the first revised model, the second revised model showed evidence of a good fit. The NFI, AGFI and NFI readings from testing the second revised model on both samples all exceeded the .90 level, and the Chi-square probability level was insignificant. The insignificant Chi-square indicated that the model estimated from the data is not significantly different from the seond revised model. The following table shows the results from testing the models (see next page):

Table: Fit Criteria Readings (Theoretical Model 2 vs. Revised Models)

Model	Sample	GFI	AGFI	NFI	χ^2 (p)
Theoretical model 2	Analysis sample	.8905	.1788	.7315	.0001
1st revised model	Analysis sample	.9766	.8313	.9512	.0026
2nd revised model	Analysis sample	.9880	.9157	.9775	.0955
	Holdout sample	.9911	.9503	.9746	.3266

Note: n = 182 (analysis sample); n = 183 (holdout sample, tested with an error restraint set on the extraction of "job satisfaction with pay" to generate the latent variable of job dissatisfaction). GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; AGFI = GFI Adjusted for Degrees of Freedom; NFI = Normed-Fit Index; χ^2 (p) = Chi-square probability level.

[57] See endnote No. 56.

[58] See endnote No. 56.

[59] The fit indices readings were .9929 for GFI, .9503 for AGFI and .9798 for NFI, all exceeding the .90 level required for a good fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996). The Chi-square was insignificant, adding more evidence for the fit of the model (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996) (source: Schumacker, R. E., & Lomax, R. G. (1996). *A Beginner's Guide to Structural Equation Modeling.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers)

[60] See endnote No. 56.

[61] The path coefficients for the holdout sample reported here were those obtained with error variance restraint for the extraction of the observed variable "satisfaction with pay" (to form latent variable of job dissatisfaction). The restraint is used to ensure that the error variance is positive, since a negative error restraint is not possible.

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Local Views on Local News

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ABSTRACT

Expanding on research studying the relationship between community ties, uses and gratifications and media preferences, this study, based on a 1998 telephone survey in which half of the respondents use the internet at home, finds those with strong ties to the local political process (through voter registration, planning to vote and higher levels of political activity), and those who anticipated continued residency in the community, identified newspapers as the preferred medium for information about local public affairs.

Introduction

The front-page story in the local weekly paper was typical:

> PROBLEMATIC SEWERS MAY BE STUDIED IN SALINA…. Public hearing extended twice. Representatives from Ajemian Properties, LLC again came before the Salina Town Board to ask for its approval on map and site plan application…. At the previous town board meeting, residents told the board members the sanitary sewers presently are overburdened and they were opposed to having commercial properties hooked into their residential systems (Buczek, 1998, p.1).

Not an article that would excite or even interest everyone, but for some, this story provides exactly the type of information they seek in order to participate in and follow local political decision-making. The local weekly paper in Liverpool NY that provided this coverage markets itself as "chock full of news you care about," and claims that "[I]f you're interested in finding out about local government, school news or happenings in the community, this paper is for you." (*Review*, 1998, p.1).

This Research

Coming from nearly a decade of active involvement in local municipal decision making, I know that many elected and appointed officials want to know how to best reach the public they serve. Local public officials are often uncertain about how to do that because small municipalities rarely hire trained public relations or public information staff or those who are familiar with mass communications research results for advice. While it may be true that some officials might rather make decisions without the knowledge and consent of the governed, my experience has been that most do want an informed and active public. Most have voiced the assumption that in a democratic society, the sharing of information with the public is most likely to lead to the improvement of governmental decision-making (Tichenor, Donohue & Olien, 1980).

The research described in this paper was based designed to explore the connection between a variety of ties to the community and their potential in our current media and information rich environment for predicting the likelihood that an individual would place importance on local decisions. The research also asks what type of media would be most satisfactory to someone with strong community ties who placed great importance on knowing about local decisions. The goal was to provide some information that would allow local officials to make informed decisions about the placement of information about local political affairs in the medium best suited for reaching those who had varying levels of interest in local decisions.

The four hypotheses tested in this research were:

H1: The stronger an individual's ties are to his/her community, the more likely the individual is to attribute a greater level of salience to decisions made by local elected officials.

H2: The greater the salience of local political decisions to the individual, the more likely the individual is to rely on local newspapers as a source for information about local political decisions.

H3: The greater the strength of an individual's ties to the community, the more likely the individual is to rely on local newspapers as a source for information about local political decisions.

H4: Those who identify their community in geo/political terms are more likely to rely on local newspapers for information about local decision making.

The inquiry described in this paper began with an interest in the continued relevance of research indicating that newspapers are the preferred method of obtaining information about local decision making for those with certain types of strong ties to their communities (Stamm & Fortini-Campbell, 1983). Would changes in the availability of alternate media choices, like the blossoming internet or increases in local government programming on cable TV, affect those who had previously demonstrated preferences for newspapers as a local news source? Where would those who indicated strong interest in political decision-making find out about what was happening in their community? Would newspapers continue to be seen as "highly informative" conveyors of public affairs (Chaffee & Kanihan, 1997)? The short answer is that, at least in Onondaga County, New York in the fall of 1998, newspapers are the preferred source for local political news for those with ties to the community political process.

For those in a position to advise local officials interested in effectively reaching the public they serve, as well as those who advise newspapers covering local public affairs, recent work in three theoretical areas of mass communication research, including the results of this study, have some insight to offer. The three areas are: community ties research, based primarily on the work of Stamm (1990) and others (Stamm & Fortini-Campbell, 1983; Stamm, Emig & Hesse, 1997; Stamm & Guest, 1991)), uses and gratifications research, particularly as updated in the work of Rubin (1994) and media dependency theory, as discussed in the work of Williams, Strover & Grant (1994) and Gaziano (1990). Although the hypotheses reported in this paper focus primarily on the predictive power of community ties, the descriptive statistics collected provide support for an active public, using a variety of media, and depending primarily although not exclusively, on newspapers, for information about local decision-making.

Community Ties

Research examining the relationship between the role of the press and an individual's ties to community has a long history. Based originally on sociological concerns for communities disrupted by the automobile, the population explosion and mass movement from farm communities to the urban areas during the first half of the twentieth century, many scholars trace the beginnings of community ties research to the early work of Morris Janowitz (1952). According to Stamm and Fortini-Campbell (1983), Janowitz was primarily interested in the role of the local press as a tool for helping displaced individuals integrate into their new communities (Stamm & Fortini-Campbell, 1983, pp. 3-4). Newspapers were seen as having the potential to fill many roles that would assist with that integration: They supported group activities, had the power to enhance personal prestige, defined local issues, reflected local opinions and disclosed threats to the community (Greenberg, 1963). Continued exposure to the information in local papers was seen as an important method of creating a sense of identity and connection to the new community (Bogart & Orenstein, 1967). Researchers theorized that newcomers could use the local press to facilitate that integration process (Stamm & Fortini-Campbell, 1983). Recent research, however, suggests that this may not, in fact, be the case (Stamm & Guest, 1991).

Some of this early work focusing on the potential for community newspapers to create an environment that fostered involvement was, of course, in the days before television became an icon in nearly every American home, decades before the cable box sat on most television sets, and nearly a half a century before the internet-connected computer became a mainstay in many homes, libraries and government and business offices. Fax technology existed, but most phones did not have a fax connected to them.

Early questions of cause and effect were raised by community ties scholars. Was the local newspaper the agent for fostering ties or did people begin to buy and read a paper because they had already become attached and wanted to know what was going on (Stamm & Fortini-Campbell, 1983)? These causal questions still remain largely unanswered, but, as we shall see, they have been a focus of recent research.

From as early as 1965, studies demonstrated a continuing correlation between various kinds of ties to a community and higher rates of local newspaper readership (Bogart & Orenstein, 1965, Bogart, 1967). However, in the nearly forty years that scholars have been looking at the community/media connection, problems of comparison have arisen between studies, in part because of lack of agreement on what is meant by the term "community." An explication of the term "community" was undertaken by George A. Hillery, and documented in his 1955 article entitled: Definitions of community: Areas of agreement, published in *Rural Sociology*, 20, 111-23. Stamm & Fortini-Campbell describe the results of the Hillery study as a proposal that the effort should be abandoned as hopeless because of the number of different meanings attributed to the term community (1983, p. 5).

Certainly nothing has changed since 1983 that would suggest the explication of the term has become any easier. How many different meanings might the word community imply to a survey respondent? The neighborhood? The city, town or village? The county or the largest adjacent urban area? Church or school? Perhaps, a non-geographic community of those sharing a similar interest to which the respondent belongs? What about those with whom the respondent communicates on the internet on subjects of common interest, but has never met? How about those with whom the respondent works every day?

One recent definition can be found in the work of Jeffres, Dobos & Sweeney (1987). Relying on previous work, they defined community as "that population which carries on its daily life through a given system of relationships" (Jeffres, et al., 1987, p. 620).

Stamm & Fortini-Campbell decided to avoid the problem of lack of agreement on the term community, by instead dividing the concept into three domains: community as place, as structure and as process. Subsequent researchers have explored one or more these three domains, using a variety of different indicators of ties to the community (Jeffres, Dobos & Sweeney, 1987; Jeffres, Dobos & Lee, 1988; Emig, 1995).

This differentiation has helped, but not fully resolved problematic aspects of research in this field because of the large variety of terms used to describe ties to the community, coupled with the even larger number of variables used measure the concept "ties." Attachment, involvement, integration, affection, identification and pride have been used as functional equivalents for the concept "ties" (Stamm & Fortini-Campbell, 1983; Jeffres, Dobos & Sweeney, 1987; Jeffres, Dobos & Lee, 1988; Gaziano, 1990; Stamm & Guest, 1991; Emig, 1995; Rothenbuhler, Mullen, DeLaurell & Ryu, 1996; Stamm, Emig & Hesse, 1997).

The variables used to operationalize those ties or attachments have been even more numerous and have included: length of residency in the community and intention to remain, home ownership, membership in groups or churches, parenting of school-aged children, voter registration and likelihood of voting in the future or voting in the recent past, as well as subscription to a newspaper. By 1985, Stamm announced that he had counted thirty-six different variables that were being used to measure ties to the community (Stamm, 1990, p. 358-359).

In 1990, Stamm, wrote a rather serious article, decrying the patterns that were emerging in community ties research, and proposing directions for future research. Perhaps ironically, many of those research patterns appear to be based on the admiration of other scholars for Stamm's own work. Merely creating indices which combined various previously (or even newly) identified community ties variables and evaluating how strong they were as predictors of media preference, Stamm said, missed the most important reason for conducting community ties research (Stamm, 1990, p. 361). After nearly sixty years, he said, the real questions of value were not what knowledge of community ties could do to predict levels of newspaper readership, but rather what could newspapers (and other mass media) do to assist in the community integration necessary for effective democracy (Stamm, 1990, p. 361).

Stamm proposed that the examination of antecedents, cause and effect and an understanding of why certain people pick certain media to answer certain information needs are of more consequence to understanding the role of newspapers and other media in the community integration process, than endless re-examinations of variables that might predict media preference in slightly different contexts (Stamm, 1990, p. 360-1). As he rightly noted, the problem with continued re-iteration using similar variables is that it can exacerbate analyses of causation. When the same variable is used to measure both cause and effect, little of real import is learned about the nature of the relationship.

As an example, one of the variables often used to measure an individual's connection to community is home ownership. Some scholars have seen home ownership as an independent variable that causes or predicts media preference (Stamm & Fortini-Campbell, 1983, Emig, 1995). A train of such connections might run along these lines: *I want to (or have to) live here. I'll buy a house. Now that I have a house, I better keep up with what's going on in* *my community. I may need to know about taxes or other local decisions that will impact the value of my property. I better subscribe to the paper.*

Others (Jeffres, et al., 1987) have seen home ownership as the dependent variable that results from or is predicted by the individual's having become committed to the community, perhaps, through the power of the mass media to engender the necessary affective ties to the community or neighborhood. A train of such connections might run along these lines: *I read about this place in the paper. It sounds good. I like what I read. I want to live here. I'll buy a house here.* So long as the same variable is being used as both independent and dependent variable, sorting out cause and effect is made even more ambiguous.

Stamm (1990) also criticized the continued focus on preference for newspapers as the primary inquiry. Since at least the sixties, Bogart (1968) and others (Bogart & Orenstein, 1965) had reported that newspapers are only one of the media choices that individuals make for learning about news. People do not have to pick one medium to the exclusion of others, and most use many media, for different purposes and at different times. Medium choice need not be exclusive; many media can be complementary (Bogart, 1968; Bogart, 1993; Lawrence, 1993; Rubin, 1994). Bogart (1968) reported on this multi-media use pattern. He found that four out of five reported reading the paper on an average workday, while three out of five watched the news from television and over half listened to the radio (Bogart, 1968, p. 561). This type of complementary use of the various news media continues to be observed (Gaziano, 1990; Bogart, 1993; Emig, 1995; Stamm, Emig & Hesse 1997).

Based on data from a 1989 telephone survey in a middle-sized southeastern city, Emig (1995) studied whether variation in the relative strengths and kinds of ties to the community would result in different media use. Using the Stamm model, he created a media typology in which he divided community ties into three categories: spatial ties to place: residency length (greater than 5 years), residency type (permanent or temporary) and home ownership; spatial process ties (registered to vote, voted last election) and communication process ties (following what goes on).

Instead of looking at various media in isolation, Emig used his typology to see if the strength of each of the individual community ties indicators for space and process made a difference among those who used neither TV nor papers, those who used TV, those who used newspapers, and those who used both as local news sources. He concluded that spatial ties to place performed poorly as indicators of media preference. Home ownership, which had faired well as a predictor of newspaper subscribership in the Stamm & Fortini-Campbell study (1983) proved to be a very poor predictor of preference in Emig's work. On the other hand, process ties, like voter participation, were good predictors of media use and preference. Like Stamm, Emig called for further research into cause and effect (1995, p. 408-409).

In articles published in 1991 and 1997, Stamm demonstrated that he had followed his own advice for pursing alternative avenues of community ties research. With Guest (1991), and using a phone survey of 400 new residents of the Seattle area conducted in 1988 and 1989, he analyzed the role of media in newcomer integration into the community. The authors found that although newcomers had strong information needs, newspapers did not fill the new residents' information needs particularly well. Stamm and Guest theorized that one reason for this gap was that newspapers made little effort to identify and gratify the newcomers' information needs.

In 1997, with Emig and Hesse, Stamm published the results of his 1994 examination of the contributions that various media make at various stages in an individual's integration into the community. Their conclusions were that although the media (both TV and newspapers) do play some role in increasing an individual's involvement with the community, that interpersonal communications are much more important than mass mediated communication in the involvement process, and that media contributions are very much correlated to the stage of settlement in the community. They suggested longitudinal studies as the logical next step.

Although Stamm never makes specific reference to the obvious alternate theoretical approaches to the question of which individuals use which media and for what purposes, the uses and gratifications school and the media dependency theorists have some contributions to make to the examination of this question.

Uses and Gratifications

Uses and gratifications theory posits an active audience and hypothesizes that these active audience members will seek from among the complex of group of media choices, the ones which best suit the particular need to be gratified (Gaziano, 1988; Rubin, 1994; Emig, 1995). If the need is one for information about local affairs, then the choices of suitable methods for satisfying that information need have multiplied in recent years. In 1999, media choices include not only the more traditional local information sources, like daily and weekly local newspapers, local television station affiliates of larger broadcast giants, regional magazines and local radio stations, but also include cable television's public access channels. These public education and government access channels often feature local news reports, public information programming, which may include dates and agendas of public meetings, and, in some communities, live broadcasts of local municipal government meetings.

The internet has added even more possibilities. Not only is contact with elected officials via e-mail generally available, many municipalities have their own web pages, designed to update interested community members about matters of public concern. Many municipalities have "listserv" features, which allow community members, no matter where they are currently located, to be "on the list" to receive information about particular topics or to participate in dialogues on issues of import, so long as they have e-mail addresses. The variety of communication methods, the widespread availability of VCRs and similar taping equipment, allows for the phenomenon of time shifting. If you know that your village council will be debating a matter of concern to you on your local cable station at a time when you are taking the children to a soccer game, you can record the meeting with your VCR, listen to it later, and send your officials your opinion by e-mail in the dead of the night, if you care to do so. You don't have to be available during normal business hours, or when the meeting takes place, in order to be informed and to participate.

The availability and usefulness of these new technologies, particularly the internet, has radically increased since the bulk of the community ties research was conducted. Even the most recent articles (Emig, 1995; Rothenbuhler, et al., 1996; Stamm, Emig & Hesse, 1997) are based on research that is four to ten years old. Internet use has grown enormously in the four years since the Stamm, Emig & Hesse (1997) research was conducted.

Scholars have begun to look at the effects of new technology on media preferences. For example, Bromley and Bowles (1995), exploring the validity of McCombs (1972) relative constancy theory, reported the results of their 1994 study of the impact of internet use on the traditional news media in Blacksburg, West Virginia. Blacksburg is the home of the first "electronic village," serving as a designated research model for an ideal of a national information superhighway. Every resident of Blacksburg was offered free access to the internet. At the time of the study, only five months after public terminals became available, more than 1000 community members were already on line, with an estimated 150 more signing up each month. Bromley and Bowles hypothesized that "users of interactive computer networks, at least during the initial startup, will spend less time with newspapers, television and radio, than they did before adopting the new technology (p. 15)." Although their hypothesis was not supported because the bulk of the respondents did not report statistically significant decreases in use of traditional media, 18% of those surveyed did report a decrease in time spent viewing television since using the internet. Slight decreases were also reported in reading the paper and listening to the radio.

Other researchers, employing a uses and gratifications approach, have looked at the impact of non-traditional media on the political process and its effect on other media. Johnson, Braima & Sothirajah (1998) explored the role that the internet and other non-traditional media (primarily talk radio) played for those seeking national political information during the 1996 presidential election. They characterized their study as occurring "during a lethargic campaign and at a time when the internet was getting its "test drive" as a new campaign medium." Although their findings did not support the view that non-traditional sources had displaced traditional media for the 1996 campaign, they noted that only 12% of those polled by the Pew Research Center reported using the internet for political information during the 1996 campaign. Bromley and Bowles felt that this was a percentage that seemed likely to rise as internet use for all purposes increased, and, as politicians improved their understanding of the internet's inexpensive possibilities as a media tool.

Media Dependency

Advocates of media dependency research claim that it has greater utility than media use inquiries (Gaziano, 1990, p. 2). Dependence has been defined as a relationship between individuals or groups and external information sources that satisfy information needs (Gaziano, 1990, p. 2). Dependence on particular media is seen as increasing as social complexity increases and alternative information sources decrease (Gaziano, 1990, p. 2). Increasing social complexity makes it harder for any one medium to reach all people and satisfy all needs, if that had ever been possible, even in a simpler time (Rubin, 1994; Williams, Stover & Grant 1994). Using a national data set from 1985, Gaziano looked at six different dependence models (ranging from those with high dependency on both TV and newspapers to those who depended most on news magazines). Among other questions asked regarding dependency was whether the respondent "would feel lost" without the named medium.

Media choices for specific purposes varied considerably based on the respondent's specific dependency. For example, 33% of those who were rated high on dependency on both TV and newspapers said they would chose newspapers as the <u>one</u> source for local news; 51% of the same group chose television. When the question asked which medium those with high dependency on both TV and newspapers would chose as most trustworthy for helping to explain a difficult or controversial local news situation, the results reversed. Newspapers were seen as most trustworthy for that purpose (48%), while television was rated most trustworthy by only 32%. When all dependency groups were examined, television ranked first as the one source people would chose for local news (television: 49%; newspapers 36%; radio: 12%; magazines: 2%). That relationship reversed when all dependency groups were asked the most trustworthy medium for help in understanding difficult or controversial local news (newspapers 46%; television: 43%; radio: 10%; magazines: 2%).[1]

In conducting the research on which this paper was based, I owe a debt to all of three theoretical constructs.

Methods for this research

Data for analysis in this study were collected as part of a larger telephone survey designed and conducted primarily by doctoral students of Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications in the fall of 1998. The questionnaire used in the phone survey contained 134 questions and provided information for ten different media-related research projects. A subset of thirty-four questions that were used for the study described in this paper is available upon request. Two different versions of the entire questionnaire were pre-tested, resulting in alterations to the original order and format.

The sample for this survey was randomly selected from the population of adults 18 and over residing in Onondaga County, New York.[2] The survey interviews were conducted over a two-week period just before the elections of 1998 by eight doctoral students and 30 additional graduate students, who received course credit for their help. [3]

Including demographics for control, thirty-four questions were used to test the four hypotheses described in the introductory section of this paper as well as to determine general levels of media use. These questions did not use a uniform format. Some called for responses at the nominal or ordinal level. Others used interval and ratio formats. Of the thirty-four questions, several were based on Likert scales or modified Likert scales. However, for several of the Likert scale questions, the original variables were transformed for analysis. For example, one question that asked the respondent to identify political party affiliation on a Likert-like scale, was converted for analysis into the categorical variables, "affiliated" and "not affiliated." A similar treatment was applied to a question that asked the respondent to chose from a list that included geopolitical and non-geopolitical terms, the one that **best** described community for the respondent. For analysis, the response to this question was transformed into two categorical variables, "geo-political identification" and "non-geopolitical identification." The question asking for educational level was converted from an ordinal, grade system, into an interval system based on years of education, and then categorized for analysis and discussion into four quartiles.

All data from the entire questionnaire were entered into an SPSS data file and copies of the cleaned data file were given to each of the researchers involved in the overall project for his or her own use in analysis. Access to the entire data set not only permitted researchers to use any of the variables as controls, it also afforded the opportunity for post-hoc analysis for some researchers of variables they had not considered using in their original designs.

Because this study was concerned with the impact that various indicators of community attachment would have on local political interest and media preferences, the variables included some of the classic community ties variables previously discussed. These community ties variables were divided into questions which asked about 1) ties to the space or place (residency): home ownership, length of time in the current home and in the county, likelihood of remaining in the county for more than five years; and 2) ties to the process (political attitude and activity): voter registration status, likelihood of voting, political party activity and affiliation and geopolitical community identification. Newspaper subscriber status was also considered as a community ties indicator.

The variables that evaluated the salience of local decisions asked respondents to respond on a Likert scale, indicating whether they considered it important to know about decisions of local officials, and whether they made any effort to tell local officials about their opinions before decisions were made.

Overall media use was examined with questions about the number of days and minutes per day the respondent spent watching television, listening to the radio, reading newspapers, using the internet and watching local TV news. Because the internet is such a new medium, respondents who indicated they used it at home, were asked how long they had been doing that. Respondents were also asked whether they read a newspaper, and if so, how they got their paper. They were also asked whether local media gave them the information they needed to tell local elected officials how to decide local issues.

Media preference for finding information about decisions of local officials was examined with the single question: *Thinking about decisions made by local officials, where do you get most of your information?* Respondents were offered the choices: daily newspaper, weekly newspaper, local TV news program, local radio station news, the internet and other.

Results[4]

The phone survey resulted in 368 completed questionnaires. The response rate of 36% and the cooperation rate of 38%, calculated using the new AAPOR formulae, was disappointingly low. Like many who are conducting phone surveys,[5] we found that in the late 1990s respondents used answering machines to screen calls. Repeated attempts at contact and leaving messages explaining that the project was sponsored by the University made no impact. Even for a university-sponsored research project, many were adamantly unwilling to participate.

We conducted post-survey comparisons of our 368 respondents to the comparable population of Onondaga County. Running chi-square tests comparing our demographic results to the most relevant 1990 census data, board of elections' voter registration counts and marketing statistics data from 1996, resulted in some slight, but generally statistically significant differences between those who answered our questionnaire and the comparable Onondaga County population.

Our 368 respondents were slightly older and significantly more educated than the general county population. A larger percentage of our sample said they were registered to vote than the percentage of county residents who are actually registered. Our sample under-represented those who said they made $50,000 or less for household income in 1997, and over-represented those who said they made more than $50,000, as compared with the county income statistics. Racially, our sample slightly under represents the white and African-American population of the county, and slightly over represents Native Americans, Asians, and those who identify as multi-racial or "other." The differences in gender distribution between our respondents and the general county population were not statistically significant.

Media Use

Ninety percent of our sample reported that they read a local paper. Seventy percent of them received home delivery of their paper. Approximately sixty percent said they watched TV, listened to the radio and read the paper seven days a week. Forty-five percent watched local TV news seven days a week.

Our sample spent an average of two and half-hours per day watching TV, a similar amount of time listening to the radio and another hour reading the newspaper. Nearly fifty percent of our sample used the internet, and of those, seventy-five percent said they used it at home. Forty-five percent of those who used the internet at home are relatively "new users" who have been on-line at home for less than two years. Those who used the internet at home spend about an hour per day on-line.

Fifty-two percent of our sample learned most of their information about decisions made by local officials from their daily paper. An additional six percent found that information in their weekly paper. Twenty-five percent reported that they found most of this information on local TV news, and ten percent heard it on the local radio news.

Forty-six percent of our respondents agreed that local media coverage gives them the information they needed to tell local officials how to decide local issues.

Political Activity and Attitudes

This is a group that reported a high voter registration status (88%) and a similarly high (86%) likelihood of voting in the 1998 election. That election was held approximately two weeks after the survey was completed. Nearly seventy percent identified themselves as affiliated with one or the other of the two major political parties, but only a third considered themselves to be active in their parties. Forty-eight percent said that they liked to discuss politics, and a nearly equal number (40.2%) said they made an effort to tell local officials their opinion before a local decision is made.

Sixty-five percent said that the word that best describes community for them is a geopolitical term (for example, city, town, village or county). Nearly ninety percent said it was important for them to know about the decisions of local elected officials.

Residency

Our sample was very stable as far as residency is concerned. Eighty-one percent of our respondents live in a house, rather than an apartment (17.5%), and 93 percent of those living in houses live in one that the respondent or a family member owns. Only twenty-five percent of the respondents have lived in their current home for four years or less; seventy-five percent have lived in their current home for more than four years. Twenty-four percent have lived in their current home for more than 21 years. Seventy five percent of the respondents have lived in the county for sixteen years or more. Eighty-three percent thought that they are likely to be living in the county five years from now.

Strength of community ties

One originally disappointing finding was that there was no reliable way to construct a single reliable scale or index to measure the strength of an individual's ties to the community from the responses to the questions posed on the survey. However, for reasons described in the "Community Ties" section of this paper, this may actually have been a better approach. The three interval level, two ratio level and five nominal level variables that were anticipated to work together as different indicators or predictors of the strength of an individual's ties to the community were not sufficiently reliable, even when converted to z-scores, to create a single index. Pairs of variables, and in the case of the Likert scale variables, a triple set of variables, were found to be reliable together (alpha > .6), but the entire scale did not have enough similarities to be treated as a whole. So, for the two hypotheses that involved community ties variables, each of the individual variables was tested to see if it supported each of the relevant hypotheses. Each set of results appears beneath the original hypothesis.

H1: The stronger an individual's ties are to his/her community, the more likely the individual is to attribute a greater level of salience to decisions made by local elected officials.

Using the single variable rather than the index approach, H1 was partially supported. Several of the variables that were identified as predictors of community commitment showed small, but statistically significantly support, for the hypothesis. The three Likert-scale variables (activity in political party, likelihood of continued residency in Onondaga County for the next five years and likelihood of voting in the then upcoming 1998 election), all showed modest, but statistically significant support for this hypothesis (Table 1).

Table 1 about here

The strongest of the statistically significant relationships was between political party activity and the salience variable (making an effort to tell local officials an opinion before the official voted on a local issue). The weakest of the statistically significant relationships was between likelihood of continued residency in the county and the salience variable (making an effort to tell local officials an opinion before the official voted on a local issue).

Curiously, neither of the ratio level variables (length of time in current home and length of residency in Onondaga County) was supported as an indicator of an individual's likelihood of attributing salience to the decisions of local officials.

Table 2 about here

Of the five nominal level variables (Tables 2 and 3), only an individual's voter registration status indicated a relationship to salience of local decisions (Table 3). Voter registration status increased the likelihood that an individual would consider it important to know about decisions of local officials.

Table 3 about here

H2: The greater the salience of local political decisions to the individual, the greater the reliance on local newspapers as a source for information.

This hypothesis was supported. Both indicators of salience of local decisions (important to know about decisions and making an effort to make opinion known) tested as statistically significant predictors of the likelihood that an individual would identify the most important source for information about local decisions as the local newspapers (Table 4).

Table 4 about here

H3: The greater the strength of an individual's ties to the community, the greater the individuals' reliance on local newspapers for information about local decision-making.

Table 5 about here

As with H1, all of the community ties variables could not be reliably tested in a single index as a predictor of an individual's reliance on local newspapers for information about local decisions. However, taking each of the variables individually, the hypothesis was partially supported. Only three of the variables (subscribing to the paper, voter registration status and likelihood of voting in the upcoming 1998 elections) tested as statistically significant indicators of an individual's choosing local newspapers as the most important source of information about local decisions (Tables 5-7).

Table 6 about here

Table 7 about here

H4: Those who identify their community in geopolitical terms are more likely to rely on local newspapers for information about local decision making.

The last hypothesis was not supported (Table 8). People who identified their community in geopolitical terms, although slightly more likely, by numbers, to indicate reliance on newspapers as their most important information source, did not chose newspapers in statistically significant numbers.

Table 8 about here

Finally, after reviewing the original data, I examined the subset of the population that used the internet at home to determine if they were any different on the relevant variables from the total population. None of the differences were statistically significant.

Discussion

As a novice, I was delighted to achieve statistical significance for any of the correlations necessary for supporting my hypotheses. If Stamm (1990) is correct in his view that indexes confuse the questions of the relationship of community ties to media use and preference and to examining the role of the various media in the community integration process, then it turns out to be a fortunate happenstance that I could not create a "community ties" index. Examination of the correlation of each proposed variable turned out to be the currently recommended approach.

Analysis of individual indicators permitted me to conclude that even for a population where half of the sample uses the internet at home, only one residency tie (likelihood of continued residency for five years) had any predictive power for interest in the local political process. Process ties were much more important. Those who reported that they were registered to vote, planned to vote or indicated that they were politically active, placed a higher degree of importance on knowledge about and involvement in local decision making. Those who subscribed to a paper were also more likely to be interested in the local political process.

For those who place high importance on the local political process, newspapers were the statistically preferred medium for information about the local process.

The same indicators of community ties (likelihood of continued residency, voter registration, likelihood of voting and subscriber status) that correlated with salience were the only variables that indicated preference for newspapers over other media as a source for news about local decisions.

What public officials and those who advise public officials can learn from this research is that although local newspapers remain the best way to reach the politically interested public with information about local public affairs, substantial numbers of the population do use other media to obtain that information. More than a quarter of those surveyed preferred local television news as their most important media source. Half of the population is using the internet for at least an hour a day at home, but the net has not yet become a medium of choice for local political news.

If this area of research is to provide any ongoing usefulness to those who are trying to reach community members with information about public affairs, future research should move in several directions. First, any further survey research should explore the assumption that there is an active audience out there using a variety of media for different purposes and at different times. Second, an attempt should be made to break the concept of "local news" into smaller segments to see if there are different media selected for different types of local news. For example, do people look to one kind of media for crime information and another for land use issues. Third, what types of media are most likely to engender involvement, the conversion of information seeking into some kind of action? Fourth, is there variation in dependency on media that is correlated to lifestyle or current work styles that would allow us to predict when and how to reach those with heavy work schedules?

In addition, descriptive research should begin to focus on the quantity, rates of access and quality of various alternative media for local political purposes. If half of our population reports using the internet, this medium must be taken seriously as a potentially powerful tool for the exchange of local political information. What do people mean when they say they use the internet? Is the internet being used to read the online version of the newspaper? If many report using local television and radio, then we need to know when and how. Is the population that reports preference for television and radio using technology like the VCR or tape recorders to time shift to capture information, or perhaps, "doubling" time. By doubling time, I mean doing more than one thing at the same time -- listening to the radio while driving home from work; watching television while ironing or preparing for dinner. In short, if surveys are going to be used as one basis for understanding how to reach the public interested in local decision-making, (and there is no doubt that they will because they serve an important, timely and relatively inexpensive function), our questions must focus more carefully on the range of uses and dependencies.

Finally, I share in the view that merely establishing correlations between various indicators of community attachment does not address the serious question of whether particular media contribute to the integration and involvement assumed to be necessary to the effective operation of a democracy. Longitudinal studies seem to be recommended to resolve these issues, and I see no reasons, other than time and money, to suggest that they would not be an effective measurement method. Certainly, surveys with the low response rates that seem to be the norm, have not been able to untangle questions of cause and effect.

Table 1. Pearson correlation coefficients for salience variables (important to know about decisions and effort to tell about opinion) with community ties variables for political activity, likelihood of voting and continued county residency and length of residency in current home and Onondaga County.

Variables	2	3	4	5	6	7
Salience Variables						
1. It is important for me to know about decisions being made by my local elected officials.*	.3741 [c] (363)	.2280 [c] (362)	.2790 [c] (360)	-.0873 (364)	.1249 [a] (358)	-.0185 (365)
2. I make an effort to tell local elected officials my opinion before they make their decisions.*		.3762 [c] (358)	.2173 [c] (356)	.0054 (361)	.1064 [a] (355)	.0527 (362)
Political Activity and Attitudes						
3. I am active in my political party.*			.2558 [c] (356)	.0468 (360)	.1163 [a] (353)	.0680 (361)
4. How likely are you to vote in the Fall 1998 election?**				.1148 [a] (359)	.2113 [c] (352)	.1288 [a] (360)
Residency						
5. How long have you lived in this county? (in years)					.2987 [c] (357)	.5581 [c] (365)
6. How likely are you to be living in this county five years from now?**						.1598 [b] (358)
7. How long have you lived in your current home? (in years)						

[a] $p < .05$

[b] $p < .01$

[c] $p < .001$

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* Responses were coded: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.

** Responses were coded: 5 = very likely, 4 = likely, 3 = neither likely nor unlikely, 2 = unlikely, 1 = very unlikely.

Table 2. Independent t-tests for community ties variables (home ownership, geopolitical identification and newspaper subscriber status) by salience of local decisions to the respondent variables.

Community Tie Variable: Home ownership

Salience Variables[i]	No Means (& SD)	Yes Means (& SD)	t value	df	sig.
It is important for me to know about decisions being made by my local elected officials.	4.05 (.74) N=21	4.3 (.74) N =283	-1.5	302	.14
I make an effort to tell local elected officials my opinion before they make their decisions.	2.8 (.94) N=21	3.03 (1.09) N =281	-1.13	300	.26

Community Tie Variable: Geopolitical Identification

Salience Variables	No Means (& SD)	Yes Means (& SD)	t value	df	sig.
It is important for me to know about decisions being made by my local elected officials.	4.23 (.80) N=120	4.25 (.75) N =227	-.25	345	.80
I make an effort to tell local elected officials my opinion before they make their decisions.	3.05 (1.04) N=118	2.97 (1.09) N =226	.67	342	.50

Community Tie Variable: Newspaper Subscriber Status

Salience Variables	No Means (& SD)	Yes Means (& SD)	t value	df	sig.
It is important for me to know about decisions being made by my local elected officials.	4.21 (.69) N=99	4.3 (.77) N =233	-1.03	330	.30
I make an effort to tell local elected officials my opinion before they make their decisions.	2.94 (1.04) N=97	3.10 (1.07) N =231	-1.18	326	.24

[i] Responses to all salience variables were coded: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.

Table 3. Independent t-tests for community ties variables (voter status and party affiliation) by salience of local decisions to the respondent.

Community Tie Variable: Voter Status

Salience Variables[ii]	No Means (& SD)	Yes Means (& SD	t value	df	sig.
It is important for me to know about decisions being made by my local elected officials.	3.77 (.93) N=45	4.3 (.71) N =319	-3.7	51.64	.001
I make an effort to tell local elected officials my opinion before they make their decisions.	2.8 (1.1) N=45	3.04 (1.07) N =315	-1.41	358	.16

Community Tie Variable: Affiliated with Political Party

Salience Variables	No Means (& SD)	Yes Means (& SD)	t value	df	sig.
It is important for me to know about decisions being made by my local elected officials.	4.20 (.73) N=112	4.3 (.76) N =240	-.96	350	.38
I make an effort to tell local elected officials my opinion before they make their decisions.	2.94 (1.08) N=111	3.04 (1.07) N =237	-.79	346	.43

[ii] Responses to all salience variables were coded: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.

Table 4. Independent t-tests for most important media source for information about local decisions variable by salience of local decisions to the respondent.

Most Important Media Source Variable: Local Papers[iii]

	No	Yes			
Salience Variables [iv]	Means (& SD)	Means (& SD)	t value	Df	sig.
It is important for me to know about decisions being made by my local elected officials.	4.15 (.80) N=150	4.32 (.72) N =212	2.02	360	.044
I make an effort to tell local elected officials my opinion before they make their decisions.	2.86 (1.09) N=148	3.12 (1.05) N =210	2.28	356	.023

[iii] Respondents were asked: *Thinking about decisions made by local officials, where do you get most of your information?* Responses were coded: 1 = daily newspaper, 2 = weekly newspaper, 3 = local TV news, 4 = local radio station news, 5 = the internet, 7 = other. For analysis, the responses were recoded: 1 and 2 became newspapers; 3 through 7 became other sources.

[iv] Salience Variables all use the scale: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.

Table 5. Independent t-tests for most important media source variable by community ties (residency and political activity) variables.

	Most Important Media source[v]				
	Newspapers	Other Sources			
Community Ties Variables	Means (& SD)	Means (& SD)	t value	Df	sig.
Residency					
How long have you lived in your current home (in years)?.	14.36 (13.14) N=211	12.87 (11.51) N =149	1.11	358	.27
How long have you lived in this county (in years) ?	33.16 (21.45) N=211	328.87 (21.17) N =148	1.88	357	.062
How likely are you to be living in this county five years from now?	4.37 (1.21) N = 208	4.35 (1.21) N = 145	-.12	351	.91
Political Activity and Attitude					
I am active in my political party. [vi]	2.81 (1.09) N = 211	2.89 (1.20) N = 146	-.69	355	.49
How likely are you to vote in the Fall 1998 election? [vii]	4.59 (.97) N = 209	4.22 (1.29) N = 146	2.97	254	.003

[v] Respondents were asked: *Thinking about decisions made by local officials, where do you get most of your information?* Responses were coded: 1 = daily newspaper, 2 = weekly newspaper, 3 = local TV news, 4 = local radio station news, 5 = the internet, 7 = other. For analysis, the responses were recoded: 1 and 2 became newspapers; 3 through 7 became other sources.

[vi] Responses were coded: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.

[vii] Responses were coded: 5 = very likely, 4 = likely, 3 = neither likely nor unlikely, 2 = unlikely, 1 = very unlikely.

Table 6. Crosstabulation of most important media information source variable by community ties residency variable (home ownership) and media use variable (subscriber status).

Community ties residency variable: home ownership

Media Information Source variable	Yes	No
Thinking about decisions being made by local officials, where do you get most of your information?		
Daily newspaper	54.1	42.9
Weekly newspaper	6.1	14.3
Local TV news program	21.5	23.8
Local radio station news	11.1	9.5
Other[viii]	7.2	9.5
	100.00% (N= 279)	100.00% (N= 21)

$X^2 = 2.67$; df = 4; ns
Cramer's V = .09

Community ties media use variable: subscriber status[ix]

Media Information Source variable	Yes	No
Thinking about decisions being made by local officials, where do you get most of your information?		
Daily newspaper	56.7	11.1
Weekly newspaper	6.4	5.6
Local TV news program	22.1	47.2
Local radio station news	8.6	25.0
Other [2]	6.1	11.1
	100.00% (N= 326)	100.00% (N= 36)

$X^2 = 31.06$; df = 4; $p < .000$
Cramer's V = .29

viii Respondents were asked: How do you most often get your paper: 1 = home delivery, 2= buy it from store or box, 3 = read someone else's, 4 = read it at the library, 7 = other. For analysis, this question was recoded: 1 = subscribes, 2-7 = does not subscribe.

ix Respondents were offered the choice of internet or other for this last category. Because of the small number of respondents who chose either, this category was compressed into "other."

Table 7. Crosstabulation of most important media information source variable by community ties political activity and attitude variables (party affiliation and voter registration status) variables.

Community ties political activity and attitude variable: affiliation[x]

Media Information Source variable	Yes	No
Thinking about decisions being made by local officials, where do you get most of your information?		
Daily newspaper	54.8	48.1
Weekly newspaper	5.9	8.3
Local TV news program	25.1	21.3
Local radio station news	9.2	11.1
Other[xi]	5.0	11.1
	100.00% (N= 239)	100.00% (N=108)

$X^2 = 6.03$; df = 4; ns
Cramer's V = .132

Community ties political activity and attitude variable: voter

Media Information Source variable	Yes	No
Thinking about decisions being made by local officials, where do you get most of your information?		
Daily newspaper	55.1	35.6
Weekly newspaper	7.0	2.2
Local TV news program	22.0	40.0
Local radio station news	9.2	15.6
Other [2]	6.7	6.7
	100.00% (N= 45)	100.00% (N= 314)

$X^2 = 11.11$; df = 4; $p < .026$
Cramer's V = .176

[x] Respondents were asked: *In terms of political party affiliation, would you consider yourself to be: 1 = strong Democrat, 2 = moderate Democrat, 3 = independent, with no party affiliation, 4 = moderate Republican, 5 = strong Republica*n. For the purposes of this study, responses 1, 2, 4 and 5 were coded as "affiliated," and a response of 3 was coded as "not affiliated."

[xi] Respondents were offered the choice of internet or other for this last category. Because of the small number of respondents who chose either, this category was compressed into "other."

Table 8. Crosstabulation of media information source reliance variables by geo-political community identification variable.

	Identification[xii]	
	non-geo/political community identification	geo/political community identification
Thinking about decisions being made by local officials, where do you get most of your information?		
Daily newspaper	51.3	52.7
Weekly newspaper	5.1	7.1
Local TV news program	24.8	25.2
Local radio station news	10.3	10.2
Other[xiii]	8.6	4.9
	100.00% (N= 117)	100.00% (N= 226)

X^2 = 2.20; df = 4; ns
Cramer's V = .10071

[xii] The respondents were offered the following choices: 1= city, 2= town, 3= village, 4= neighborhood, 5= church, 6= work, 7= school, 8= or something else, specify ______. No reference was made to the concepts of geopolitical or non-geopolitical identification. Some respondents spontaneously offered the responses "county" and "nation," which were coded post-hoc. For the purposes of this study, the geopolitical descriptions were placed in one category and the non-geopolitical terms in the other.

[xiii] Respondents were offered the choice of internet or other for this last category. Because of the small number of respondents who chose either, this category was compressed into "other."

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ENDNOTES

[1] The numbers were often quite different when the questions focused on "best" sources for national or international news, rather than local news.

[2] To reach the sample, a software product containing a directory of phone numbers for the Onondaga County area was used (SelectPhone, Pro-CD, Northeast, 2nd Edition, 1998). Because Pro-CD software did not allow for alteration of fields or randomization, random sampling methods were then applied to select a group of approximately 2000 numbers from the residential list of 160,000. The survey team hoped to complete 400 interviews.

[3] Before the field period started, each interviewer received approximately three hours of training and a comprehensive manual which outlined every phase and aspect of the interview process using actual examples from the final questionnaire. As a step to decrease known gender biases in responses to telephone surveys, and to randomize within the household, the interviewers conducted a "KISH" test for each household. During the field period, supervisors verified slightly more than 10% of the completed questionnaires.

[4] Descriptive statistics are not being provided in tablular form, but they are available upon request.

[5] Frankel, M.R. and Frankel, L.R., (1987) Fifty years of survey sampling in the U. S. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 51 supplementary Number S127-S138; Steeh, C. G. (1981) Trends in non-response rates:1952-1979. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 45(3), 40-57.

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